SUMMER DOUBLE ISSUE

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Why aren't more Canadians going to the movies this summer? *www.macleans.ca/atthemovies*

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JEAN-MARC CARISSE, COVER GETTY IMAGES

'Throwing money at security is no guarantee of safety, but it does guarantee more aggravation and longer lines at airports and border crossings.' —Peter McCann, Toronto

Fallout from the London bombing

The July 18 cover photo is amazing! It so completely expresses the quiet, indomitable courage of the British in the face of the terrorist attacks. Congratulations to the photographer Edmond Terakopian of AP for capturing it so eloquently.

Patricia MacDonald, Maple Hill, P.E.I

Your story ("I have just seen hell," Cover, July 18) is right: the terrorists did pick the wrong city, and the wrong people. Londoners endured bombing for months during the Blitz, and England continued to be bombed intermittently throughout World War II. The British generally do employ a sardonic sense of humour, which is sometimes misunderstood, but it helps them to face this kind of hardship. The extraordinary efforts of the police, the doctors, and volunteers in coping with this tragedy are to be applauded.

Rosalind Jones, London, Ont.

I am writing in response to the story "How Safe Are We?" about Canada being unprepared for a possible terrorist attack to correct the record on some key points. The article states that the U.S. has passed legislation allowing the two governments' customs booths to "switch ends" to protect the Ambassador Bridge infrastructure on the border between Windsor, Ont., and Detroit, but that Canada is not moving ahead. In fact, Canada has worked with the U.S. on a framework for land pre-clearance, which was agreed to and signed in Detroit in December 2004 by myself and former U.S. homeland security secretary Tom Ridge. This framework commits to the arrangements for the relocation of land border inspection staff of one country into the other. A formal agreement between Canada and the U.S. and legislative instruments in both countries are necessary to allow for implementation. The two governments are actively negotiating this agreement. The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring the Windsor-Detroit crossing remains secure and efficient. The Windsor region is home to an RCMP-led Integrated Border Enforcement Team and the



Government of Canada's most recent budget increased funding to enhance the joint presence of the Canadian Coast Guard and the RCMP on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. Canada's National Security Policy, introduced last year by our government, sets out an "all hazards" approach to protect Canadians from a range of potential threats, no matter where they live.

The Honourable Anne McLellan,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Ottawa

Anne McLellan said, "We need to spend more time looking at the psychological preparedness of our people because an emergency or a disaster can strike at any time." It sounds like McLellan is getting her speeches written by the White House! To me, her words translate into "Be afraid! Be very afraid!" Where does McLellan suggest Canadians acquire the "psychological preparedness" for terror attacks? Should we go see a psychologist, a psychiatrist, or a GP to deal with "preparedness deficiency"? How many months would we have to wait for an appointment?

Russell Barth, Ottawa

I found "The unending horror," your timeline on terrorist acts since 9/11, offensively biased. Conveniently omitted are atrocities

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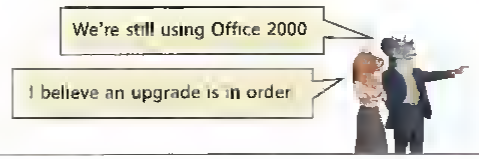
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involving the death of innocent Muslims. If I wanted such American bias, I would subscribe to *Time*.
Terri Chu, Toronto

Kudos to your magazine for publishing the timeline on terrorism. You should know that since the establishment of the State of Israel, there have been about 70,000 terrorist attacks with the death of thousands and the maiming of countless others. Israel is the place where the so-called militants perfect their evil skills, and then export them to the rest of the world.
Noel Hershfield, Calgary

Canadians will never be prepared for a terrorist attack until Canada is attacked, and even then it will take repeated occurrences for Canadians' collective mindset to adopt an emergency preparedness mentality. Experience is the only teacher.
Douglas Cornish, Ottawa

Maclean's treatment of the story of Canada's safety is little more than fear mongering. We do not need you, or our government, employing the tactics of intellectual terrorism by fanning the flames of fear and suspicion that accompany such alarms. Reasonable preparations for all manner of potential national emergencies make good sense but we don't need an exploitation of the disaster in England, a country which operates under internal politics and foreign policy that differ from our own.
Linda Watson, Winnipeg

You end your cover stories by saying, "Canadians have no such history [referring to the IRA bombing of Harrods in London] to learn from." I vividly recall the War Measures Act invoked by our federal government in 1970 to deal with FLQ terrorists in Quebec. I recall a cabinet minister being murdered by them and a British Trade Commissioner being kidnapped. Was this not terrorism? Is this not our history?
Richard McCleary, Creemore, Ont.

Of smoking and smoking guns

Steve Maich's column is one of the first regular features of *Maclean's* that I turn to each week. But he has lost his usual insightful perspective in his article about the unfairness of lawsuits against the tobacco companies ("Pity poor big tobacco," All Business, July 18). To suggest that the tobacco companies are punished at all, let alone enough, by the taxes levied against their products is absolute nonsense. Beyond the possible impact of increases in taxes on the volumes of cigarettes sold, they get their costs and significant profits regardless. Considering the damage they have wrought upon millions of people, it is reasonable that they be called upon to make reparations out of their money, and the efforts of B.C. and the other provincial governments deserve to be successful. Maich's comment about the floodgates being opened against other big business interests that knowingly imperil their customers is a sobering thought, but it does not follow that efforts to remedy this situation should cease.
John Mitchell,
Scarborough, Ont.



Laying flowers at one bomb site: indomitable courage

> **Canadians permit the sale of a product known to kill thousands each year. Why? Tax revenue.**

Why do we Canadians permit the manufacture and distribution of a product known to destroy health or kill thousands of our citizens every single year? Because we need the tax revenue. Get a grip, Maich!
A. Randall Symons,
West Vancouver, B.C.

Steve Maich's column "What's a whistle-blower?" (All Business, June 27) should have been an interesting piece. But when he equated the recently fired Health Canada employees Shiv Chopra, Margaret Haydon and Gerard Lambert with the efforts of "every crank with an axe to grind," the logic died. Maich may or may not know that the Health Canada scientists' problems date back at least to the early 1990s, and were far more serious than a disagreement with other scientists. They were concerned that, as Maich says, "certain drugs and additives should be banned." Only after they had exhausted all of their options within the system did they go public with those concerns for the safety of Canadians. Did Health Canada try to get to the bottom of the situation so that solid, independent science would be rewarded? No, it fired the scientists who spoke out about health risks to the food and feed supply in Canada in relation to animals possibly infected with BSE. Two years later, some of their recommendations have been accepted by the Canadian government as it scrambles to protect Canadians.
Stewart Wells, President, National Farmers Union of Canada, Swift Current, Sask.

Tanned and fit

In response to the critical letters you printed about the actress Polly Shannon on your June 27 cover "Killer tans," I see nothing wrong with your use of her photo tied in with your tanning story. She is a good fit. But the reaction of your readers shows that no matter what you publish, someone is always offended. Keep up the good work.
Jan P. Loos, Vernon, B.C.

Thanks for the pictures and article about Polly Shannon. I met her once at her mom's Christmas party and I can tell you that, aside from being easy on the eyes, she is unspoiled, lacks pretension, and is very

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caring, so she contrasts sharply with the public images of J Lo , Britney and Angelina. I wish her every success

Rick Lorenz, Kanata, Ont.

Unbiased journalism?

Peter Mansbridge is letting the CBC's penchant for supporting the underdog go to his head When he discusses the launching of an English-language al-Jazeera network ("The world's a stage," Mansbridge on the Record, July 18), he quotes their managing director's claim that the channel will present an "unbiased view of world events." Mansbridge should be well aware of the fact that there is no such thing in journalism. As I understand it, al-Jazeera already has a host of detractors within the Arab world who disagree with the slant and choice of the network's stories, I would expect this trend to continue whether it broadcasts in English, Arabic, or Mandarin.

Adam J. Green, Ottawa

Well-loved children

How could the University of Western Ontario honour Dr. Henry Morgentaler with a doctorate ("The good doctor," Up Front, June 27)? This was not a morally neutral statement on the part of the university and it is an affront to the most helpless of our society, the unborn. It is also the most bitter of ironies because these children, had they been allowed to live, would be filling our universities today

James Klaas, Guelph, Ont.

I am appalled by Dr. Henry Morgentaler's statement, "Well-loved children grow into adults who do not build concentration camps." Morgentaler's justification for abortion being based on the case of an isolated monster is a poor reason to determine the fate of an innocent fetus who will never have the chance to be loved by anyone

Hanne Simoes, Mississauga, Ont.

MACLEAN'S 100 | FROM OUR PAGES

'The bathing girl is no recent acquaintance of *Maclean's*'

SOME READERS CHEERED and others jeered when *Maclean's* put bikini-clad Canadian actress Polly Shannon on its July 18 cover. Not much has changed. In 1948, the magazine printed a letter signed "A Lover of Landscape, Animals and Children Subjects," praising a recent cover depicting a dog, and lamenting the abundance of "half-naked bathing girls" on other magazine covers. "We blush to confess that the bathing girl is no recent acquaintance of *Maclean's*," our editors responded, seizing the opportunity to reproduce several covers from 1915 through 1946, all featuring comely young women in beach attire.

Maclean's swimsuit coverage reached an all-time high in the 1960s, precisely when coverage of the female form was reaching new lows. A 1967 fashion spread celebrated a Canadian innovation called the "trikini"—on the bottom, a conventional bikini bottom; up top, nothing but a pair of separate, shallow cones, attached to the wearer's breasts with two-sided tape. In a centrefold photo for a 1968 swimwear story, the model wore a teeny bikini and a lot of plastic grapes. This summer's Polly Shannon cover is tame by comparison. But of course, there will always be those who would rather see a mutt on the cover during the dog days of summer. — *Pamela Young*



The Aug 1, 1936 cover, and the 'trikini' cheers and jeers

From Our Pages celebrates Maclean's centenary

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MACLEAN'S BEHIND THE SCENES



CANNES CAROUSEL

Maclean's Senior Writer Brian D. Johnson, the magazine's film critic, briefly set aside his laptop and went behind the camera at this year's Cannes Film Festival. The result was *Cannes Carousel*, a six-minute short now appearing on *macleans.ca*.

Filmed on a Sony HDR-FX1 HD video camera and reduced to low-definition format for the website, *Cannes Carousel* is a whirlwind ride through the festival, featuring an interview with actress Sarah Polley and footage of directors Atom Egoyan and David Cronenberg, whose films, *Where the Truth Lies* and *A History of Violence*, premiered at the festival. *Cannes Carousel* also captures the night magic of Cannes with kaleidoscopic images—Naomi Campbell stepping into a blaze of cameras, Salma Hayek dancing on the beach, fireworks exploding over the Mediterranean to music from the films of Fellini.

Johnson, who began shooting and editing as a hobby two years ago, describes Cannes as "a surreal visual event, a carnival. It has a zoo-like atmosphere and you see hand-held mini DV cameras everywhere. Nothing goes undocumented."

He joined Cronenberg's retinue arriving for the premiere of *A History of Violence*. Slipping his camera into the cinema, he also captured the five-minute standing ovation that followed the film, and Cronenberg's reaction, which saw him hold his wife's DV camera aloft in a triumphant salute, then execute a slow pan around the room.

While Johnson has no ambitions to quit his day job for filmmaking, he was recently awarded a Bravo!FACT grant to make a short documentary/dance film titled *Hands On*. The film will air on the Bravo! Network. Meanwhile, check out the Cannes video at *macleans.ca/cannescarousel*.

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Gaza | Israel draws the line against its own people

Israeli security forces confront a huge contingent of pro-settler protesters at Kfar Maimon, near the Gaza border

They've pulled back from the brink—sort of. The threat of a massive Israeli invasion of Gaza receded as Palestinian rocket attacks petered out. But the tanks remained, scores of them in impressively long columns, as did the competing factions: Israelis vs. Palestinians, Hamas militants vs. the Palestinian Authority, Israeli settlers vs. their own government. With the scheduled start of Israel's pullout from Gaza just weeks away, the situation on the ground was far from certain.

Under intense pressure from Israel, Palestinian security forces moved to rein in Hamas. And while those two groups of Palestinians exchanged gunfire, Israel returned to its controversial policy of assassinating alleged extremists. The violence marked a shift from the calm of the last months, but the more visible problem was the growing tension within Israeli society.

Borrowing the colour orange from last year's Ukrainian revolution, Israeli protesters showed their support for the soon-to-be evicted settlers of the Gaza Strip, home to about 1.3 million Palestinians and roughly 8,500 Jewish settlers. At one point, about 30,000 protesters massed for a huge march into Gaza, only to be met by an almost equally large number of Israeli security forces—20,000 strong. The confrontation went on for nearly three days. Israeli society broadly accepts the Gaza withdrawal, judging by opinion polls, and the Ariel Sharon government is talking of speeding up the event to take the wind out of the protesters' sails. But as the moment draws near and its significance sinks in—the Israeli army will not just be destroying Jewish homes in Gaza but more than 30 synagogues and religious schools—Sharon's tactical withdrawal could be more of a turning point than he bargained for.

Quote of the week | **'To put a large brand on a small lamb would just be cruel.'** Saskatchewan sheep farmer **DWAYNE MORVIK** objects to new U.S. rules that require imported sheep be branded with a hot iron, not just ear-tagged

ScoreCard

TORONTO, EH
"Toronto English" evolving into "dramatic new way of speaking," says new study. One example: "eh" being replaced at end of sentences by "whatever," "right," or "stuff." As in: "You sure are sweating and stuff." This is progress? Whatever.

SASQUATCH
Bigfoot makes typically furtive showing, flitting through woods near Teslin, Yukon. Causes international media stir by leaving telltale tuft of hair. Evidence is irrefutable: summer news doldrums have arrived.

BARBIE
Mattel fails to force name change of Barbie's Shop, a Calgary bondage and stripper-wear store owned by Barbie Anderson-Walley. Toy giant objects to association with business using stiletto heels and latex to mold anatomically unlikely human forms. Hey guys, looked at *your* Barbie lately?

UKRAINE
President sacks country's 23,000 traffic cops, calling them foul-mouthed and dishonest. Drivers celebrate but skittish pedestrians must wonder if chaos replaces corruption. One thing for sure: won't be any chickens crossing the road.

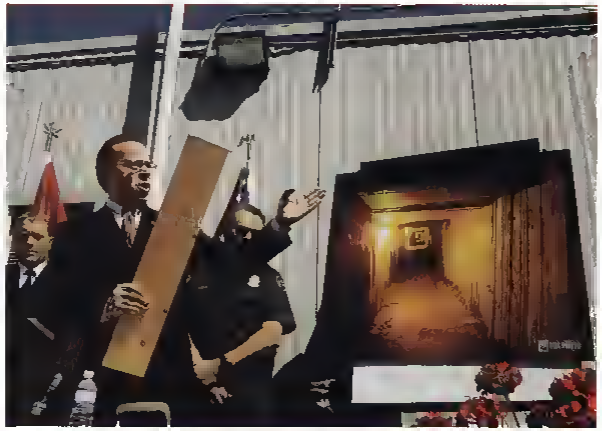
WORLD

IRAQ With an al Qaeda website calling for an all-out assault on Baghdad, dozens of suicide bombers were plying their deadly trade daily in the Iraq capital. In one week alone, nearly 200 Iraqis were killed by suicide bombers and other militants—attacks were averaging nearly 70 a day across Iraq. The assault threw a wrench into the governing process as prominent Sunnis, under threat of assassination, withdrew from the group writing the constitution.

In a report, two British groups said nearly 25,000 Iraqi civilians have died in the first two years of the conflict, up to March 19. It claimed 37 per cent of the victims were killed by U.S. and coalition forces.

BOMBERS A series of carbombs exploded in the early morning hours of July 23 around the Egyptian seaside resort of Sharm el Sheikh, with reported casualties ranging as high as 50 dead and more than 100 wounded. Tourists from Israel, other parts of the Mideast and Europe flock to the Red Sea resort at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula for its pristine beaches and coral reefs. Last October, explosions in two other Sinai resorts killed 36 people.

NOMINEE In his bid to reshape the U.S. Supreme Court, George W. Bush nominated John Roberts, 50, a prominent Washington lawyer who has been a judge for only two years. He is to replace the retiring Sandra Day O'Connor, a notorious swing voter. Because of his relative youthfulness and the fact he co-authored a brief challenging the controversial U.S. abortion decision *Roe vs. Wade*, his nomination hearings are sure to come under intense scrutiny.

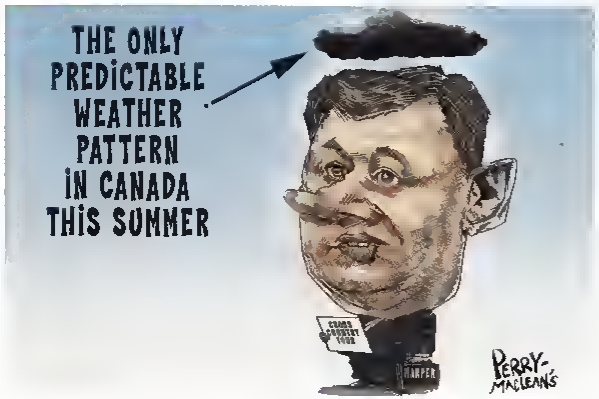


TUNNEL VISION As crooks go, they made good gophers. Police in Canada and the U.S. are still laughing at three Surrey, B.C., men who spent a year digging a 110-m tunnel under the Canada-U.S. border to smuggle marijuana, only to be nabbed three weeks after its completion. Authorities had actually watched them haul away dirt and bring in the two-by-six supports for months. Believed to be the first smuggler's tunnel from Canada, the excavation went from a Quonset hut in Langley, B.C., to the living room of an old house in Lynden, Wash., right across the border.

NUCLEAR CLUB Once a pariah for having secretly developed and tested a nuclear bomb, India was praised as a responsible nuclear state by President Bush and promised U.S. help with its civilian reactors. The American endorsement, during a state visit by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, surprised many Western countries, including Canada, which suspended its nuclear relations with New Delhi after India used Candu technology to explode its first bomb in 1974.

RENMINBI China bowed to pressure from its trading partners and agreed to revalue its main currency, the renminbi (or the yuan, as many call it). The change means Chinese goods should become slightly more expensive as the renminbi will no longer be pegged directly to the U.S. dollar. That nearly 10-year-old policy has created a huge trade imbalance with the U.S. by keeping the renminbi artificially low.

BY GREG PERRY



TED S. WARREN/AP

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HEALTH

MISCARRIAGE Scientists at the Ottawa Health Research Institute found a genetic basis for many late-stage miscarriages: a defective enzyme that can restrict the blood flowing through the placenta. This can lead to stunted fetal growth and miscarriage or early baby death. The next step is to find a way to predict the condition.

BREAST CANCER Night workers and women who sleep with a light on may have a higher risk of contracting breast cancer, Boston-based researchers suggested. That's because they have lower levels of melatonin, a hormone the body produces during darkness to help promote sleep.

CANADA

GAY MARRIAGE Three years and eight days after an Ontario Superior Court first ruled gay marriage legal, it became the law of the land. Following a brief, if fractious debate in the Senate, the Liberal government's bill to allow same-sex weddings became law on July 20. Canada is the fourth country in the world, after Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain, to recognize the practice.

MURDERED Neighbours called them an ideal couple. And when Liana White, 29, and pregnant with her second child, went missing on July 12, supposedly on her way to her hospital job, Edmontonians joined the search en masse. Her body was found five days later on the outskirts of the city—by a volunteer search party headed by her husband Michael, 28. A mechanic and former soldier, he was charged with her murder, though police have offered no motive, nor any direct evidence to link him to the crime. Her body was so decomposed, police said they may never know exactly how she was killed.



SWIM LESSONS About 500 Canadians drown each year, the Red Cross says, and a new study by the Canadian Institute for Health Information found drowning is the second leading cause of death for children under 5, after auto accidents. The federal minister for public health, Carolyn Bennett, said she wanted to make swim lessons part of public school curricula and would talk to the provinces about help with funding.

NATIVE RIGHTS The Supreme Court of Canada rejected claims by Mi'kmaqs in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick that they could cut and sell timber from Crown land without a government permit. More importantly, the court severely restricted the legal underpinnings of the claim—that friendship trading agreements signed with British colonial officials centuries ago form the basis of a full treaty right. These friendship agreements are being relied upon by many native groups across the country for land claims and also for the right to control natural resources like oil and gas that are found on native land.

NHL Fittingly, perhaps, the Pittsburgh Penguins won the draft rights to scoring phenom Sidney Crosby, probably the most hyped junior prospect since, well, Mario Lemieux, the Penguins captain and co-owner. The much-delayed draft came after the players, then the 30 club owners ratified a new six-year, salary-capping deal after a lost NHL season. The deal also ushers in a number of rule changes. Goalie equipment will be smaller, there will be no two-line offsides and a shootout will take place if the game is still tied after five minutes of four-against-four overtime.



HOLIDAY FUN Thousands of tourists, mostly Canadians and Americans, were forced to sleep in makeshift shelters and at airports after Hurricane Emily ripped into the popular Cancun resort area on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, tearing the roofs off some hotels and playing havoc with flight schedules.

EDMONTON SUN/CP (TOP); DAR O LOPEZ M LLS/AP

Mansbridge on the Record



CHATEAU MIKE WEIR

Perhaps it's time for our greatest golfer to focus on just one thing—his game

A FEW YEARS AGO, I visited a sports memorabilia plant that was pushing out an astonishing array of stylishly framed and personally autographed action photographs of some of Canada's athlete heroes. You've probably noticed just how far that market has extended in recent years—it's gone from trading cards to everything from bobblehead dolls to fine clothes. The question for our sports stars, it seems, is not whether to cash in, but when. For some, the future seems obvious, and that's why we see Sidney Crosby entering the fray before he's even played one professional game. But for the more average athlete, it's a delicate question of timing. That day in the plant I heard a wonderful little story about one of those less obvious heroes.

In the weeks *before* the Masters in April 2003, Canadian golfer Mike Weir felt he was ready to move on the fame he'd been achieving by winning a few tournaments on the PGA Tour. In fact, his friend Wayne Gretzky apparently agreed with that thinking, even suggesting a contact he might talk to in the memorabilia business in Ontario. So there was Weir visiting a facility already successful in selling Gretzky's image and hoping they'd do the same for him. There was only one problem—the people giving the tour weren't sure Weir was yet marketable. As one whispered during my visit, "We liked Mike and we were impressed, but who was going to rush out to buy a picture of the guy who'd won the Bob Hope Classic?" Bottom line, they were in no hurry to get moving on an arrangement.

> "Weir may be struggling this year because of his putting. It could be his latest driver. Or maybe it's something different—his wine.

Of course, a few days later all that changed when Weir won the Masters, his first golf "major," and that Toronto plant couldn't follow through on the deal fast enough. Within weeks, fancy framed shots of Weir, his arms raised over his dramatic winning putt, were being snatched up in department stores across the country. The Mike Weir clothing line soon hit the shelves, and golf accessories from hats to shoe bags to money clips quickly followed.

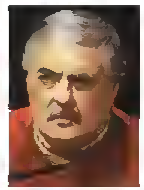
Even though Weir has won over US$11 million on the professional tour this year, the word is he's "struggling." He hasn't finished first in a year and a half now, and lately he makes the golf news not with his shots but by missing the cut because he didn't play well enough in the first two days of competition to make it through to weekend play. "What's wrong with Mike?" the sportswriters ask, and even Weir is trying to handle the question on his website. Well, I can tell you the problem might be his putting, perhaps his latest driver, maybe even his sore back, or maybe it's something totally different—maybe it's his wine.

That's right, wine. His latest venture is the Mike Weir Estate Winery. I've had a sample and the chardonnay isn't bad, nor is the fact that every dollar it earns goes to the charitable works of the Mike Weir Foundation. Still, what many of Weir's fans, and I include myself here, are hoping for is not a good bouquet, or a nice shirt or golf bag, not even a new picture to hang on the wall. We're just hoping to see our guy playing again on the weekend, striding down the fairway on Sunday afternoon, challenging for the top spot. Golf is a difficult game at the best of times and to play it well at the level Mike Weir competes at, sometimes you just have to have one focus—the game.

Peter Mansbridge is Chief Correspondent of CBC Television News and Anchor of *The National*. To comment: letters@macleans.ca

Passages

CHARGED Four months after he was deported from Canada to his native Germany, neo-Nazi Ernst Zundel, 66, was charged by prosecutors in Mannheim with inciting hatred against Jews. A decades-long fixture in Toronto and Montreal—though rejected for Canadian citizenship—Zundel was a constant Holocaust denier, which is a crime in Germany.



DIED For sure there will be no more dilithium crystals now. James Doohan, the Vancouver-born actor who stormed the beaches of Normandy with the Canadian infantry and then went on to boldly explore the universe as *Star Trek*'s chief engineer Montgomery Scott, died from Alzheimer's disease and pneumonia at his home in Redmond, Wash. He was 85.

WON For Canadian divers the Athens Olympics were a disappointment. That's behind them now. Alexandre Despatie, 20, of Laval, Que., took two golds in the early going at the world aquatic championships in Montreal. Blythe Hartley, 23, of North Vancouver also won gold.



DIED Gen. William Westmoreland, the lantern-jawed commander who oversaw the war in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968, building up U.S. troop levels, passed away in a retirement home in Charleston, S.C., at 91. For many, a symbol of all that was wrong with the Vietnam War, Westmoreland was recalled to a desk job in 1968 after his repeated requests for more troops reached their political limit.

DIED He was the Sidney Crosby of his day: a junior scoring phenom who helped the Montreal Canadiens win three Stanley Cups beginning in 1959. In Saskatchewan, Bill Hicke was also "Mr. Regina Pats" for being a player, co-owner and coach of the storied junior franchise. He died of cancer at 67.

PARAMOUNT PICTURES/AP (TOP RIGHT) AP





Terror

'LAND OF WAR'

That's how an extremist Muslim cleric refers to Britain. ROBERT MASON LEE evokes an increasingly anxious country.

IT IS MY HABIT to rise early and write for several hours, then pause in mid-morning for a late breakfast at George's Cafe, a greasy spoon much favoured by London tradesmen. The workmen take a break about the same time as I do, and George's is always busy with the clatter of plates, meal orders being shouted, and the casual profanity of the type employed by men wearing coveralls. It is the sort of place that will be banned shortly, I expect: too much grease, too much cigarette smoke, not enough vegetables, and far too much unreconstructed manhood.

It is not the sort of place, in other words, where one customarily admits to feeling vulnerable. But the morning after the second attack by would-be terrorists last week, I placed my usual order with the proprietor, then asked: "How are you this morning, Giorgio?"

"Alive, sir," he said. "That's the best part of the day, sir."

"What's that?"

"Waking up alive, sir. Much better than waking up dead."

For Londoners, there was immediate relief that nobody woke up dead after the bungled attempt to recreate the terrorist attacks of July 7, which left 52 people and four suicide bombers killed. But the relief was immediately followed by an unease that bordered on fear, and could easily cave into fear if given the chance. It has become the civic mantra in the fortnight since the first attack to declare: "We're not afraid." Now that Londoners have the distinction of living in the only Western city to have suffered multiple suicide-bomb attacks, with the distinct possibility of a longer siege ahead, they are still not afraid. But they are not quite as cocky as they once were.

Experience can bring strength; it can also bring fear. There is not a single generation of Londoners that does not remember being bombed at one time by someone or other. To employ the British gift for understatement, it is never a pleasant experience, and even less so when closer to home.

I was entering Victoria Station to catch a train on Sept. 8, 1973, when an IRA bomb ripped through the concourse, sending a cloud of black debris billowing onto the street. I escaped injury, but four others weren't as lucky. It was the start of a long week of bombing that left 24 people injured and three mainline train stations closed.

A year later, I witnessed another explosion while enjoying a pre-Christmas dinner at a friend's home in London on Dec. 22, 1974. I was unaware that Ted Heath, the former British prime minister, lived a few doors away. Midway through our meal, a one-kilogram explosive blew out Heath's windows and front door—our crockery rattled and our windows shook, even the floor vibrated. Once again, I saw the familiar plume of dust and debris in the street. It is a mark of the times that we calmly finished our dinner.

There was much relief last week that no one died in the failed attacks

And terrorism grazed my life once more, in August 1979 when the Provisional IRA planted a 23 kg bomb on the boat of Lord Mountbatten of Burma off County Sligo, Ireland. The explosion killed Mountbatten, his daughter's mother-in-law, the Dowager Lady Brabourne, his grandson, Nicholas Knatchbull, 14, and a crew member, Paul Maxwell, 15. It also badly injured Timothy, the twin brother of Nicholas, and their parents, Lord and Lady Brabourne.

I was then on close terms with Nicholas and Timothy's sister. Shortly after this, Princess Margaret landed in hot water for branding the Irish as "pigs." I could never agree with her on that, but if she had reserved the epithet for the IRA, I would have sent her flowers.

In theory, this experience should cause me to fear the terrorists less. Like every other Londoner, I know how remote are the odds of being killed in an explosion—even one that happens a short distance away. Instead, it has had the opposite effect. Islam teaches

DANIEL DEME/WENN JONATHAN BAINBRIDGE/REUTERS

that the bridge to Paradise is hair-thin and razor sharp—and so, too, it seems to me, is the razor's edge of chance separating life from death

Chance was on London's side on July 21, when the four bombs, again in "burning cross" configuration across central London, only partially exploded. Yet the narrow escape only served to underline the greater horror of what might have been. For the first time, rescuers arrived in so-called hazmat protective suits, highlighting the potential for a biological or chemical attack. And according to eyewitness accounts, the would-be assassin on the Northern Line at the Oval station detonated his device while standing next to a woman holding a baby. One of the advantages of suicide bombers, we are told, is that they are able to choose the time and place of their explosion. And this one chose—chose!—to blow up a baby. A merciful Allah intervened.

I believe there is no point in trying to understand the mindset of someone who would try to blow up a baby,



The four men wanted in connection with last week's botched explosions

A HEADLINE IN THE *DAILY MIRROR* CRIED OUT IN DESPAIR, 'IS THIS HOW WE MUST LIVE?'

unless that understanding helps to capture, contain, or kill him. How do you negotiate with someone who wants nothing other than for you to die, preferably in large numbers, preferably along with him? How do you reason with the infinitely unreasonable? To my way of thinking, the only response to these people is to run them down like dogs in the dirt. But I know, even as I write these words, that they are the futile taunting of the impotent. I can do nothing, other than go about my daily business. This is not like the IRA, which had an agenda, or the Nazis, who had a face. The first could be negotiated with, the second could be fought out in the open. Neither course is available for dealing with the suicide bomber.

The Metropolitan Police Service tacitly admitted as much in considering issuing orders to shoot without warning at the head of suspected suicide bombers—a shot to the chest could, after all, set off an explosive device. When I heard that a suspect had been shot to death by plainclothes police at the Stockwell Underground station—had been run down, like a dog in the dirt—I am certain others across London felt the same reaction I did: good for the police, and I hope he enjoys his trip to hell. Even the staid BBC, forbidden in a ludicrous directive from calling the bombers "terrorists" for fear of taking sides, called the deadly incident "the stuff of Hollywood thrillers."

It was, after all, a blow struck against the sense of futility, of powerlessness, of not knowing where or how to strike back, that has left Londoners feeling weak, listless and apprehensive. This mood is in stark contrast to the immediate reaction to 7/7, which was all John Bull bloody-mindedness and Churchillian rhetoric. This new sense of *weltschmertz* was best captured by two newspapers the day following the attempted bombings. The banner headline of the *Daily Mirror*, superimposed over pictures of armed police and terrified pedestrians, cried out in despair: "Is This How We Must Now Live?" And *Daily Telegraph* cartoonist Nick Garland had a sketch of a rucksack left on an empty staircase, above lines of a poem paraphrased from Ogden Nash: *The other day upon the stair / I met a man who wasn't there / He wasn't there again today / I wish, I wish, he'd go away*

The dread nightmare, in both the poem and life in London, is that he won't go away—or that the only way he will go away is through shots to the head. Instead, he seems to be getting closer. It is a 10-minute walk from my door to that of the cleric of hate, Omar Bakri Mohammed, who has lived in Britain for 20 years on social security benefits while preaching jihad against the West. He says the suicide bombers have written a "divine message in blood," and that young people should join al-Qaeda in the war against Britain, which he calls *Dar ul-Harb*, or "land of war." I would like to know his exact address, so I could ring his doorbell and slap him in the face with a pork chop. The government now says he may be deported. He should be hanged.



Mohammed: pogey, and calling for jihad

A few hours after the attempted bombings, my 16-year-old daughter called from Canada. I assured her all was well, and asked if she still wanted to come next month to London for her holiday. With more calm than I could have mustered, she replied: "Of course I'm coming, Dad. Otherwise, the terrorists win."

Of course. Lest the terrorists win, we must conquer our fears. The website *www.werenotafraid.com* has posted images from over 5,500 Londoners and others around the world, posing with the message: "We Are Not Afraid." One now shows a teddy bear under the voice balloon: "Still not afraid! 21/07/05." Londoners are anxious, nervous, fretful and worried. But they are never afraid. Fear is not an option. M

ON THE WEB For more coverage of the London terror attacks, visit *www.macleans.ca/londonbombing*

GETTY IMAGES

NO SWEAT IN CANADA

LONDON IS UNDER ATTACK and on a war footing. Heavily armed police are patrolling the subways in Washington, and commuters in New York are being subjected to random searches. Around the world, fear of further terrorist attacks is driving extraordinary security measures as governments seek to protect civilian "soft targets" from bombings. Everywhere, it seems, except Canada.

In the wake of the first London attacks, Public Security Minister Anne McLellan was reiterating this country's status as a prime al-Qaeda target, and warning Canadians to get "psychologically prepared" for a deadly incident on domestic soil. But the government and public response to the latest overseas bombing attempt seemed closer to a collective shrug than a call to the barricades. "Nobody is under any illusions," McLellan told reporters. "Because of the nature of mass public transit, you simply cannot control for every situation." Canadian authorities were already taking "appropriate measures," she said, and in the absence of a "specific threat" little more can be done. Transport Canada contacted ports, transit systems and airports to remind them to stay vigilant. Jean Lapierre, the federal transport minister, plans to meet with his provincial counterparts and transit officials from across the country, once he gets back from his summer vacation.



Official and public response to the latest news seemed to be a collective shrug

Whatever measures are being taken, the difference was hard for travellers and transit users to perceive. At the borders and airports, traffic continued to move swiftly. In Canada's major cities, it remained business as usual on bus routes and subways. Linda Fice, superintendent of system security for the Toronto Transit Commission, said police deployment levels are "under review," but no new measures are currently being contemplated. Passengers remain the first line of defence. "If a rider has a gut feeling that there is an imminent threat, they can report it to police by calling 9-1-1," said Fice. Authorities should arrive within minutes.

The union representing Customs officers says it can find little evidence of any heightened state of alert. "There have been no clear and direct management requests for more scrupulous attention to documents, there has been no requests to increase the number of referrals from the Primary Inspection Line to Secondary Inspection Areas, nor has any additional staff been called to help manage what should be an increased workload due to heightened vigilance," Ron Moran, the union president, wrote in an open letter to McLellan.

But as the London experience seems to be proving, even the toughest security measures can do little to dissuade determined attackers. John Thompson, a security analyst with Toronto's Mackenzie Institute, notes that al-Qaeda has a history of finding new, unexpected targets. The threat, when it comes to Canada, could be a school or a hospital. "McLellan's right, authorities are doing what they can," says Thompson. "But it's the plans that we're not aware of that come to fruition." JONATHON GATEHOUSE

TOBY MELVILLE/REUTERS (LEFT); KEVIN FRAYER/CP

THE 'SINS OF SCRIPTURE'

IRSHAD MANJI wonders what role the Koran could have played in the attacks

IT MAY FEEL LIKE a case of "here we go again," but the July 21 bombings in London, combined with the first wave of explosions two weeks before, are changing something for the better. I witnessed that change while in Britain several days ago. As I debated Muslim leaders about our community's response, I nonetheless commended them. Never before had I heard Muslims so sincerely denounce terror committed in our name.

By contrast, the powerless children of Beslan, Russia, didn't have nearly such an effect last year, when armed Islamists stormed their school and starved their bodies over several days. It's as if London—its pluralism, dynamism, and (we shall whisper this) capitalism—marked the line that dare not be crossed.

Then came the kicker. When we all learned that the Muslim suicide bombers were themselves British-raised, the embarrassment felt like a full-fledged exposé. For both reasons, we're finally waking up. Except on one front: the possible role of religion itself in these crimes.

The Muslim Council of Britain insists that Islam has nothing to do with the London bombings. It cites other factors as motives—"segregation" and "alienation," for example. I don't deny that living on the margins can make a vulnerable lad gravitate to radical messages of instant belonging. But it takes more to make him detonate himself and innocent others.

In moments like this, he can't afford the courage of his confusions. He needs conviction. Secular society doesn't compete well on this score. Can one get deathly passionate about tuition subsidies and a summer job? Which is why I don't understand how moderate Muslim leaders can reject, flat-out, that religion may also play a part in these bombings. What makes them so sure that Islam is an innocent bystander?

What makes them sound so sure is literalism. That's the trouble with Islam today. We Muslims, even here in the West, are routinely raised to believe that because the Koran comes after the Torah and the Bible, it's the final and therefore perfect manifesto of God's will. Translation: even moderate Muslims accept, as an article of faith, that the Koran is the untouched, immutable word of God.

This is a supremacy complex. It's also dangerous because it inhibits moderates from asking hard questions about what happens when faith becomes dogma. To avoid the discomfort of questioning our supremacy complex, we sanitize.

And so it was one week after the bombings. A high-profile gathering of clerics and scholars at London's Islamic Cultural Centre produced a statement later echoed by 500 Muslim leaders. It contained this line: "The Koran clearly declares that killing an innocent person [is] tantamount to killing all mankind."

I wish. In fact, the full verse reads, "Whoever kills a human being, except as punishment for murder or other villainy in the land, shall be regarded as having killed all humankind." Militant Muslims easily deploy the clause beginning with "except" to justify their rampages.

It's what Osama bin Laden had in mind when he announced a jihad against America in the late 1990s. Did economic sanctions on Iraq, imposed by the United Nations but demanded by Washington, cause the "murder" of half a million children? Bin Laden believes so (never mind the diversion of aid thanks to an oil-for-food scandal). Did the boot prints of U.S. troops in the Arabian peninsula, birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad, qualify as "villainy in the land"? To bin Laden, you bet. As for American civilians, can they be innocent of either "murder" or "villainy" when their tax money helps Israel buy tanks to raze Palestinian homes? A no-brainer for bin Laden.

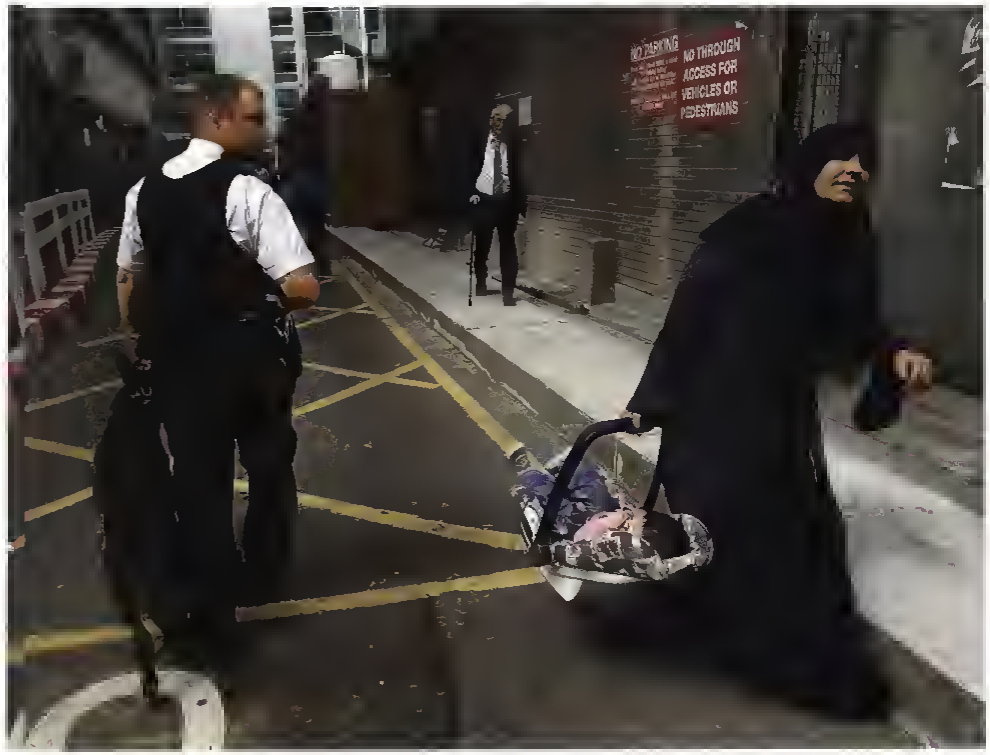
The bombers' British background deeply embarrassed their community

And, quite possibly, for the July 7 terrorists. Right out of the gate, the European jihadist group claiming responsibility cited—what else?—a defence of Iraq and a disgust with the Zionist entity as its primary incentives. The invasion of the former and the existence of the latter amount to nothing less than murder and villainy in the land. Did this interpretation of the Koran guide the British bombers? Because we don't yet know, we can't rule it out.

Yet that's exactly what British Muslim leaders are doing. To be sure, I stand with those who insist that certain Koranic passages are being politically manipulated. Damn right, they are. The point is, however, that they couldn't be exploited if they didn't exist.

We Muslims can't bear to admit as much. Why? Why do we hang onto the mantra that the Koran—and Islam—are pristine? God may very well be perfect, but God transcends a book, a prophet and a belief system. That means we're free to question without fear that the Almighty will feel threatened by our reasoning, speculating, or doubting.

How about joining with the moderates of Judaism and Christianity in confessing some "sins of scripture," as the retired Episcopal bishop John Shelby Spong recently said of the Bible? Muslims would be paying tribute to the very pluralism of ideas and interpretations that allows us to practise our faith in this part of the world.



LEFTERIS PITARAKIS/AP

'MUSLIM LEADERS ARE EXPLOITING ISLAM NOT AS A SWORD BUT AS A SHIELD'

For now, Muslim leaders are exploiting Islam, not as a sword but as a shield. They're using the sensitivity of religion to protect Muslims from genuine introspection. I don't consider this a favour—to anyone. It's time to lay down the shield and accept the birthright of an open society: that there's no heresy in asking questions. Sometimes pointed questions. Sometimes in public.

Experience tells me that most of my fellow Muslims will reject this principle in the guise of respecting diversity. Which only raises another question: how is it that in diverse societies, those who oppose diversity of thought often feel more comfortable getting vocal than those who embrace it? M

Irshad Manji is author of *The Trouble with Islam: A Wake-Up Call for Honesty and Change*

'DEFENDING OURSELVES'

Defying a travel ban, ADNAN R. KHAN visits northwest Pakistan, where the West is seen as the aggressor

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas, semi-autonomous fiefdoms on Pakistan's northwest border with Afghanistan, sit amid the birthplace of Islamic extremism. Notoriously hard to administer by the British Empire and independent Pakistan alike, the region thrives on a culture of smuggling and a distrust of outsiders. It is here that Osama bin Laden may have found refuge among people honour bound to protect their guests. And it is here that Islamic schools, or madrasas, *of the type that trained two of the bombers in the July 7 attacks on London, indoctrinate students with a virulently anti-Western strain of the religion. Defying a Pakistani ban on journalists visiting the area,* Adnan R. Khan *took the back roads south of Peshawar, and found a culture convinced that Islam—and the local Pashtun people—have to protect themselves from a belligerent West.*

IT BEGINS with a midnight meeting on a rooftop restaurant in the heart of Peshawar's old city. Muhammad is there when I arrive, sprawled out on the Afghan carpeting with a brightly coloured cushion tucked under one elbow. Three storeys down on the frenetic street, the buzz of people is beginning to taper off after a frenzy of nighttime activity, typical of Peshawar in the hot summer months. Most people don't dare venture out during the day, when the temperature tops 40 and restaurants sit empty until the oppressive sun sinks low into the thick blanket of pollution. Muhammad lights a cigarette as my translator and I sit down around a half-eaten roasted chicken.

He has a plan. "We will go on a back route to Angoor Ada," he says after the customary greetings and introduction. That's on the Afghan border, in the heart of the Tribal Areas on Pakistan's restive western frontier. Pakistan's militant indoctrination centres, the ideologically extreme *madrasas* that have been the bane of moderate Islam, are concentrated in the region. They preach a puritan brand of Islam, one that fancies itself at war with the West.

BORDERLINE BEHAVIOUR

Smuggling is a prime source of income along the rugged frontier



Muhammad (a pseudonym) sucks back Player's Gold Flake cigarettes like an asthmatic uses an inhaler. He's trustworthy enough as a guide, my translator assures me, but not someone you want to cross. With his luxuriant beard framing a set of pursed lips, his asymmetrical eyes constantly squinting, he looks like he's trying to decide whether to kill you or merely do some damage. But he knows the back routes well, having plied them for over 20 years, ferrying a variety of goods, licit and not so licit, back and forth across the rugged mountains that nominally divide Pakistan from its war-ravaged neighbour. And he knows how to slip the military checkpoints that have popped up all across Tribal country since the onset of the war on terror.

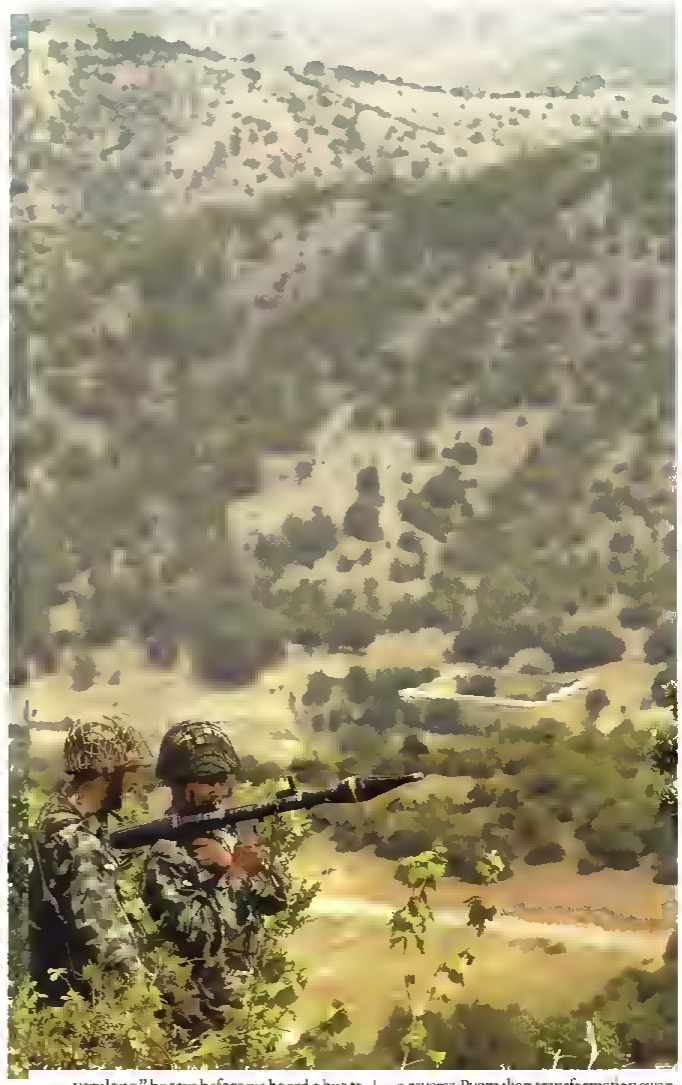
Gen. Shaukat Sultan, a ranking military public relations officer, tells me the government has barred journalists from going into the region "for your own security." I suspect it has more to do with the Pakistan military's failure to bring order to the region. The numbers tell the story: 70,000 troops deployed in Pakistan's seven Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATAs), bordering Afghanistan's restive southeast. Since operations there began in 2003, 306 suspected Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters have been killed, along with 251 Pakistani soldiers—a dispiriting ratio that underscores the lack of success in confronting terrorist threats in the mountainous Tribal belt.

Tribal country is notoriously difficult to tame. Finding itself unable to bring the fierce Pashtun tribes in line, the Empire resorted to special-status deals with local leaders. Caught in its own military stalemate over the past two years, Pakistan has adopted a similar tack, opting for negotiated settlements rather than armed confrontation. *Maliks*, the leaders of the disparate tribes, have been paid off or granted immunity from prosecution in exchange for peace.

The tactic has had mixed results. One *malik* from the powerful Wazir tribe was killed, allegedly by an American laser-guided missile, when a peace deal he signed in April 2004 fell apart almost immediately. Other agreements have secured an unsteady peace, but without forcing the tribal leaders to disarm their militias or turn over terrorist suspects. Part of the problem, explains Sultan, are local "sensitivities," a euphemism for the strict honour code called *pashtunwali*. Any attempt to infringe on what Pashtuns feel are their inherent rights, including possessing weapons and protecting their guests, is met with firm resistance.

In addition, Muhammad warns, the Tribal Areas are now crawling with Pakistani security agents. "We will not be able to stay very long," he says before we board a bus to Wana, the main city in the South Waziristan Tribal Agency. "Someone will figure out you're a foreigner and start asking questions. You can stay one night at my house in Angoor Ada, two maybe, but that's all."

I agree. Despite the local look I've adopted—a reverse Pygmalion transformation swapping my dress shirt and cargo pants for a $5 *shalwar kameez*, the baggy shirt and pant combo worn by 100 per cent of the male population in the Tribal Areas—I still have the aura of someone who just doesn't belong. I was born a few hundred kilometres from here, but I'm Punjabi, and the Pashtuns know the difference.



Pakistani troops have had little success in their attempts to bring order to the region

The road to Angoor Ada from Wana, through dry riverbeds and oddly incongruous forest and arid mountain terrain, is an apt metaphor for the wayward course of history in this area. Time and distance don't mesh here, a place where the 50-km trip takes nearly three hours, and feels more like a lifetime. Muhammad has hired a friend in Wana to drive us in his 4x4 pickup, and the two of them spend the vast majority of the journey fixated on how difficult it's become to carry on their smuggling operations. "I'm paying five times the bribes I used to pay to get across the border," the friend complains. "And the routes in Afghanistan are patrolled by Americans. I can get around them but it makes my job harder, taking the more difficult trails." Many of the locals in the dilapidated mud villages we pass depend on smuggling for their livelihoods, and any disruption to the industry has a trickle-down effect. Anger in Tribal country, as a result, can be grounded as much in economics as in religious zeal.

'MODERATION doesn't mean anything to us,' says a tea stall owner. 'It's just another word for Westernization.'

Angoor Ada is a tense place, a one road village locked in a perpetual battle with erosion. Muhammad's warning that I would stick out was well-placed. people stare, curiously at first but with a gradual transition to scorn. "You look Punjabi," Muhammad says. "Pashtuns and Punjabis don't have a very good relationship." The Pakistan military's ongoing presence in Tribal country has strained the rapport between the various groups that make up Pakistan's complex ethnic mosaic. Attacks on non-Pashtuns in the Tribal Areas are on the rise, a direct consequence of Pakistan's war on the Pashtun-dominated Taliban. In other parts of Pakistan, sectarian violence, largely between Shia and Sunni Muslims, has marred the philosophy of "enlightened moderation" promoted so zealously by President

MAP BY PEMIE GEOFFROI

REUTERS

Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

"Moderation doesn't mean anything to us," says Ghulam Nabi, a tea stall owner in Angoor Ada. "It's just another word for Westernization. We are Pashtuns and we will die honourably as Pashtuns." And they are dying, eight shot and killed in Angoor Ada alone since the start of Pakistan's military operations, according to Nabi. In other parts of the Tribal belt, the death toll is difficult to gauge. Tribal conflicts mixed with criminal activity peppered with the war on terror have produced a culture of violence so deeply entrenched that it seems impossible it will ever be completely purged. The solution, according to Nabi, is simple: "Leave us alone."

But that seems unlikely. With the London underground bombings and their connection to Pakistan reigniting tensions, villages like Angoor Ada are facing a difficult future. "There are dozens like this one in the mountains between Pakistan and Afghanistan," says Muhammad, whose smuggling routes often run through the scattered settlements in the border region. "They are isolated and very close-knit communities. An entire village is usually made up of only one or two families, so the ties are strong." Support for the Taliban runs high, he adds, but not for the reasons someone in the West might think.

"These aren't religious fanatics," Muhammad insists. "My brother has a picture of Osama in his house. He also has pictures of Bollywood stars. He's nothing like the fanatics you read about in the newspapers. He's a gentle man who works hard to support his family. Like you, I think. Not much different from anyone in the West." But in Pashtun culture, Muhammad explains, the tie to family and tribe trumps everything. The Taliban are Pashtun and, therefore, allegiance to them is natural for the conservative villagers. "Besides," he adds, "the Americans and Pakistanis have only brought pain and heartache."

The next morning, I ask Muhammad to take me to one of the *madrasas* that still operate around Angoor Ada, despite the Pakistani government's vow to crack down on them. When we arrive at the religious school,



Pakistani students reading the Koran at a *madrasa* in the Tribal Areas town of Wana

the students, ranging in age from 5 to their teens, are engrossed in memorizing the Koran. The imam, Sultan Muhammad, proudly points out that his school has produced half a dozen *hafiz*, people who have memorized the entire holy book, in the past year alone.

While the imam insists he does not preach violence, the message of hostility toward Western culture is undeniable. "The West is an enemy of Islam," he says. "They have attacked us and we are defending ourselves." But he adds that sending holy warriors abroad is not something he agrees with, there is enough of a fight to be had in Afghanistan and the Tribal Areas, a fight he believes the jihadists are destined to win. The Pakistani military "can't do regular patrols in the Tribal Areas, it would be too dangerous for them," he says. "They don't realize what they're dealing with. The mountain people are warriors. Their operations are only for show, to show the Americans that something is being done." As for al-Qaeda, Sultan Muhammad only laughs. "What is al-Qaeda?" he asks. Foreigners, even if they're Muslim, are viewed with suspicion in Tribal country, more so now than ever. The Pashtuns are not fighting for al-Qaeda, he says. They're fighting for Pashtuns.

FOREIGNERS,
even if they're Muslim, are viewed with suspicion in the Tribal Areas, now more than ever

In these time-encapsulated areas, al-Qaeda appears no more than a loose rubric designed to give a face to a feeling. If al-Qaeda means anti-Americanism, then yes, these people are al-Qaeda supporters. But if we include all of the other facets of terrorism—the cold disregard for innocent lives, the psychology of fear and the insatiable hunger for revenge—then any evidence that the people of Angoor Ada are anything like the "evil-doers" of the Western imagination is hard to come by.

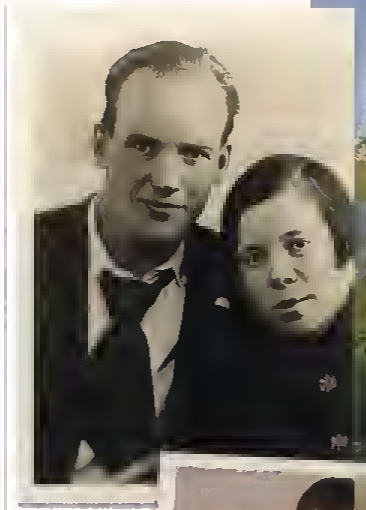
And yet, almost to a person, they would observe tradition and protect bin Laden, give him shelter and the meagre food they have, and guard him against the roaming bands of Pakistani military. "It would be an honour," says Ghulam Nabi. "He fights for our way of life." Al-Qaeda or no al-Qaeda, the sad fact remains that the violent culture the Tribal Areas has nurtured has become a threat to the West. "Life here will have to change," says Muhammad as we begin our arduous journey out of Tribal country, "but not before a lot more blood is spilled." M

KAMRAN WAZIR/REUTERS

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DEAD IN THE U.S.S.R.

Hundreds of Finnish-Canadians who went in search of a better life became victims of Stalin's purges







Aate Pitkänen (far left, with wife, Lilia) was one who went to Karelia (left) to his death, in 2002 his sister Taimi, who stayed in Canada, met Alfred, the nephew she didn't know she had

A SMALL SILVER trophy sits on a shelf in Taimi Davis's room in a Toronto retirement home. Decorated with an engraving of a man steering a plow pulled by two oxen, its inscription reads "Presented to the Champion Pupil." Now frail with age, Davis, who turns 94 on Aug. 3, won the cup in 1927 at the Kivikoski rural school fair. She was Taimi Pitkänen back then, living in a small rural community of Finnish immigrants, 14 km northwest of Thunder Bay, Ont. The following year, her brother, Aate, won an identical cup. It sits on a shelf half a world away in a Moscow apartment.

Aate's cup now belongs to his son, Alfred—a nephew Davis never knew existed until well after her brother's death. Letters Aate wrote in 1942, only hours before he was executed as a spy, finally reached her 58 years later, revealing that he had left behind a wife and infant son in the Soviet Union, where he had gone in 1931. These final missives, written on prisoner-of-war stationery, are now the subject of a National Film Board documentary, *Letters From Karelia* (airing on History Television on Aug. 1), and are part of a broader drama played out against the backdrop of Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union and the Second World War.

Aate Pitkänen was just one of roughly 2,800 Canadians of Finnish heritage who set off for Karelia, an autonomous Soviet republic, beginning in 1931. Hoping to find work and a better life, they met with betrayal and, in many cases, death. Roughly 600 Finnish-Canadians fell victim to the Stalinist purges of the mid-1930s, most ending up in mass graves throughout Karelia. It's a little-known part of history that Varpu Lindstrom, a history professor at York University in Toronto, wished to shed further light on. She's been researching the fate of the Karelian immigrants, and wants to conduct a thorough comparison between records from the Finnish Organization of Canada, documenting those who left, and Russian archives containing files on the victims, including names and dates as well as the sentences meted out—invariably death or internment in a labour camp. "I would like to do an individual account," says Lindström. "No one has looked at this from the perspective of Canadians."

Only a few years before the purges, Karelia had been held up as a land of opportunity. In 1928, Stalin launched the first of his five-year economic plans designed to bring rapid industrialization to the Soviet Union. Timber quotas were increasing, and sparsely populated Karelia needed skilled manpower to harvest its vast forests. With the Depression bringing work stoppages to the lumber camps of northern Ontario, entire families packed up, hoping to build new lives for themselves. Martha Hoxell was only 17 when she followed her future husband to Karelia in 1933, marrying him a few weeks after her arrival. Hoxell, who now lives in Thunder Bay, grew up in the same Finnish community as the Pitkänens and recalls conditions there at the time. "Everything was at a standstill," she says. "It was a real depression. We were farm kids, so we didn't starve, but we certainly couldn't get ahead. And we had ambitions."

Other factors contributed to the startling exodus, known at the time as "Karelian fever." Finland had suffered its own civil war in 1918, on the heels of the Russian Revolution, but unlike in Russia, the White faction was victorious over the Reds. These divisions travelled with Finnish immigrants to Canada, where a large number were marked by a strong streak of pro-labour sentiment. (As a young woman, Davis marched in a May Day parade and ended up spending two weeks in the Sudbury jail after a street riot broke out because a hammer-and-sickle was flown. She ended up marrying the man who bailed her out.) Such socialistic leanings no doubt influenced many who undertook the journey to Karelia.

WHEN faced with the stark reality of life in Karelia, some of the newcomers decided to come straight back home

At the same time, nationalistic considerations also played a role. Historically, Karelia straddled the Finnish-Russian border. Karelian leaders were anxious to maintain the Finnish nature of the region. Rather than allow an influx of workers from elsewhere in the Soviet Union, they spearheaded a vigorous recruitment campaign of North American Finns, aided by North American branches of the Communist Party, as well as sympathetic American and Canadian Finnish organizations. Approximately 7,000 people emigrated from North America.

When faced with the stark reality of life in Karelia—conditions were primitive, and there was a severe shortage of housing—some newcomers went straight back home. Others were more optimistic. Hoxell recalls it as "an active place, full of young people." Although she and her husband, Matt, lived in a small room in one of several large barracks, the jobs were there, as promised, along with cultural and sports activities. Matt worked as a truck driver. Hoxell took advantage of free schooling offered in her native Finnish and spent weekdays in the nearby capital of Petrozavodsk, upgrading her education and training to be a kindergarten teacher. Aate Pitkanen also found work quickly as an electrician for the telephone company. An excellent athlete, he became one of the Soviet Union's top skiers. Two years after his arrival, he applied for citizenship.

The promising start soon began to unravel. Although the workers recruited from North America enjoyed higher wages than the local population and such privileges as access to specialty stores, North American Finns chafed under the authoritarian system. Those who had been active union members in North America soon discovered that Soviet-style Communism brooked neither questions nor complaints. And then the purges came.

Between 1935 and 1939, Stalin unleashed a reign of terror unlike any in history. Tens of millions were executed or suffered crushing deprivation in labour camps. Stalin's victims included not only political and military leaders, but members of the general population and foreigners on Soviet territory. The nationalistic policy that had brought so many North American Finns to Karelia was denounced as leaving the Soviet Union open to infiltration. Finns were accused of spreading nationalistic propaganda and discontent, of holding illegal meetings, spying and sabotage. Hoxell and her husband were among the lucky ones, getting out in 1935 before the purges reached their full intensity. "They came at night, always," she recalls. "Someone was picked up and never seen again."

Aate Pitkanen stayed. He survived the purges, possibly due to his status as a star athlete, although his letters home became less frequent. But another threat was developing. In the early days of the Second World War, Finland had lost 10 per cent of its territory to the Soviet Union after refusing to hand over land voluntarily for Soviet military bases. The country retaliated, joining forces with Germany, and by 1941 had reclaimed not only the lost territory, but had pushed eastward, deep into Soviet Karelia. The Soviets drafted Finnish speakers in the region, including Aate, to spy on Finland and prepare for a counteroffensive.

Aate was captured by the Finns in 1942. From his prison cell in occupied Petrozavodsk, he wrote to his parents and sister in Canada. His first letter tells of his wife, Lilia, and their six-month-old baby. A second letter, written two days later, reveals Aate has learned his fate. "You don't need to write a reply. Tomorrow I will be free of my earthly worries." He was executed the following day.

As, strictly speaking, Canada was at war with Finland, prison warden Sakari Lehesvirta never forwarded the letters to the Pitkänen family. But he didn't destroy them either. His son, Jukka Lehesvirta, a Helsinki journalist, discovered the letters decades later and read them on Finnish radio. Listeners were moved by the story and wondered what had become of Aate's baby boy. Producers of *Wait for Me*, a Russian reality TV show that traces people lost during the tumult of the 20th century, tracked him down in 2001. Alfred, now 63 and a DNA scientist living in Moscow, was reunited with his Finnish cousins on the air.

But there was still more to come. Aate never met his young son, but he left him his silver trophy, one of the few things he had packed when leaving Thunder Bay. *Letters From Karelia* documents Alfred's journey to Canada to meet his aunt, Taimi Davis, bringing with him his father's treasured memento. "You finally find someone," Davis says, reaching for a phrase to sum up the moment. "You can't describe it." Side by side, aunt and nephew compare the small silver cups, relics from childhood and a time before the tragic events of a brutal period separated brother and sister. M

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY ALFRED PITKÄNEN (TAR-TASS PHOTOS; BEN MARK HOLZBERG/NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA





OUT WITH THE OLD...

And in with the pro-growth, pro-business new Europe

THE CENTRE OF BRATISLAVA is starting to look as impressive as any of Europe's smaller capitals, a forest of shiny new steel-and-glass office buildings around a vibrant medieval old town. But Slovakia's democratic reformers inherited a bunch of rundown and ramshackle government buildings from their Communist predecessors, and they've been reluctant to spend public money cleaning the old hulks up. When Pavol Rusko, Slovakia's minister of the economy, comes in to work, his staff calls several minutes ahead so the decrepit elevators can make their way down to the ground floor to meet him.

Rusko doesn't have time to wait for elevators, or much else. The 41-year-old minister is in charge of attracting investment to Slovakia. Given how much of a hotbed for investors the tiny, mountainous country has become, one of Rusko's biggest challenges is simply managing his schedule. Our first meeting lasted only long enough for Rusko to reschedule, apologize, and tell me he'd like to come hunt bear in Canada sometime. At the second meeting he laid out the aggressive pro-growth philosophy that has made Slovakia, a late bloomer among former Communist countries, a magnet for investment.

"The state is a bad owner and it doesn't need to create business," he said rapidly, sitting in a plush leather chair and staring at the floor as he concentrated on a familiar pitch. "The state should create conditions and not be a hindrance in the distribution of resources. So it should reallocate only as much as necessary. And it should collect from citizens the minimum necessary."

Slovakia has followed that doctrine with zeal. In 2004 it introduced a flat 19-per-cent tax on just about everything: personal income, corporate income, and sales. That year, the state investment agency signed 47 investment deals worth US$2.26 billion, compared to 22 deals worth $1.44 billion a year earlier.

The countryside outside Bratislava is starting to look like one big car factory. By 2006, Slovakia will be home to more automobile manufacturing per capita than any other country on Earth. The European Commission projects a Slovak GDP growth of 4.9 per cent for 2005, more than triple the average rate of growth for the 12 countries that share the euro currency—and more than six times the projected growth rate for Germany.

To be sure, Slovakia has a lot of catching up to do. Prosperity is spreading too slowly outside the capital. Poverty and social adjustment seem almost insurmountable for the country's Roma, or gypsy, population. The national unemployment rate is finally falling, but it is falling from a level over 17 per cent.

Car factories fill the countryside outside Slovakia's capital, Bratislava (opposite)

But if Slovakia's story were only a tale of swift catch-up in a single country, it would be of limited interest outside Europe. It's not. Slovakia is one of several countries pushing aggressive pro-growth economic policies and reaping substantial rewards. And it's not only former Communist countries that have put rapid growth at the top of their priority list. In fact, since the 2004 enlargement of the European Union that saw it grow from 15 members to 25, the pro-growth nations may now be in the majority. Which means that in the latest of the occasional debates over the future of Europe, the tables have been turned on Europe's founding nations, especially France and Germany.

In today's Europe, Thomas Friedman wrote recently in the *New York Times*, "all the innovation is happening on the periphery by those countries embracing globalization in their own ways—Ireland, Britain, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe—while those following the French-German social model are suffering high unemployment and low growth." The "French-German model" is shorthand, of course, for the economic path lately followed by, well, France, Germany, and perhaps Italy and a few other countries. It's not really a "model" so much as a series of bad habits, including unsustainable public

SEAN GALLUP/LIAISON

HOLGER HOLLEMANN/DPA/LANDOV



'COUNTRIES WILL BE SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE THEY CAN CREATE INNOVATIVE VALUE'

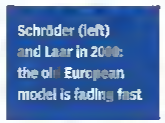
—MARTIN BRUNCKO, adviser to Slovak Finance Minister Ivan Miklos

pensions and a system of social benefits so opulent and rigid that the cost of hiring discourages employers—and the difficulty in firing discourages them even more.

Add in an ample dose of protectionism—workers from the new member states are barred, during a transition period, from seeking most jobs in "old Europe"—and you have the snail's-pace economic growth that has fuelled so many stereotypes of Europe as yesterday's club for yesterday's economic policies.

But there is a new Europe, one that only partially overlaps the pro-U.S "New Europe" that Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. defence secretary, famously identified as the best friends of the George W. Bush White House in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq war. This new, new Europe embraces both former Communist states and longstanding democracies. Its borders change depending on the moment or the issue. In fact, if Angela Merkel, a plain-spoken pastor's daughter who spent most of her life before 1989 in the former East Germany, wins a general election expected in Germany this autumn, the de facto capital of the new, new Europe may shift to Berlin.

But from now to the end of the year, the EU presidency falls to Britain, where Prime Minister Tony Blair has made reform of the EU's decrepit institutions the centrepiece of his last major political battle before his expected retirement. Which means that the rise of a new pro-growth, pro-business coalition around the periphery of Europe has become a central element of the continent's politics.



Schröder (left) and Laar in 2000: the old European model is fading fast

Maclean's recently visited three European countries whose economies are on track to grow much faster this year than the European average—and, not incidentally, faster than Canada's. Sweden, Slovakia and Estonia. Political, academic and business leaders in each country displayed optimism twinned with impatience with the old ways.

"If you take every report on the European situation—whether it comes from the left, from the right, from liberals, conservatives, socialists—it's all the same," Mart Laar, the former prime minister who hauled Estonia kicking and screaming into the modern era, said in an interview in a Tallinn cafe. "Every report says what is the problem of Europe. The list is exactly the same. Every politician who is working in Europe looks at this list and is scared absolutely, because they're all sacred cows: agricultural subsidies, labour market, service market, taxation. All things which are either not to be touched or, when you touch it, there will be a lot of trouble."

But the leaders of the new member states, who brought their countries back from Communism, have seen worse trouble. They survived and thrived, and they're eager to share what they've learned. And in surprising corners, much older democracies are relearning lessons from their national histories that leave them far better-placed to face a harshly competitive world than some outsiders would ever have expected.

Take Sweden.

"Europe is losing market share," Kai Hammerich, president of the Invest in Sweden Agency, said in an interview in Stockholm. "It's losing competition. I mean, look at the Lisbon agenda"—the 2000 agreement by which European leaders pledged to make their continent the world's most competitive knowledge-based economy by 2010. "*C'est une rigolade*. It's a joke. Instead of narrowing the gap, the gap has become more important. And then, I mean, having an EU budget where 43 per cent of spending goes toward agricultural support? It's old fashioned."

Hammerich, a courtly former journalist, added one more item, protectionism, to his articles of indictment. "We see, every day, more and more discussion down on the continent about, 'How can we protect ourselves regarding competition from Asia?' for example. The old protectionist winds are slowly starting to blow." The countries most tempted by that kind of defensive crouch, Hammerich added, are the ones having the hardest time controlling public deficits and maintaining economic growth: France, Germany, Italy. "We have got a completely different point of view," he said. "It's not that globalization is only positive, that's not my point. But a country like Sweden has so much to benefit and gain from globalization. There are few countries as well-placed to benefit from globalization as Sweden."

Why? Because of traditions of entrepreneurship and trading that are centuries old. But for the sake of argument, Hammerich picked a more recent starting point. After the Second World War, Sweden's tiny internal market, less than a third the size of Canada's, pushed its entrepreneurs out into the world decades earlier than the business communities in larger countries. "But if you are to compete abroad with products from a small country like Sweden, it must be state-of-the-art," Hammerich said. "Because in your own home country, people, for reasons of family almost, might buy your product. But if you are to compete with your product in

THE FRAU EVERYONE'S WATCHING

WHEN TONY BLAIR did a little on-the-side diplomacy in the run-up to June's failed European Union leaders' summit, he flew to Berlin for a visit that began with a face to face meeting with Angela Merkel. One of the most important appointments in Jacques Chirac's July calendar was a meeting at the Elysée Palace with Merkel. Their July 19 tête-a-tête lasted an hour and a half.

All of which is a little odd, because Merkel isn't the chancellor of Germany. Not yet, anyway.

That honour won't come until after elections currently expected for Sept. 18. Maybe not even then—Merkel's embattled opponent, the Social Democrat Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, has won his way out of tight spots before. Indeed, Schröder went to considerable trouble to push the general election forward a year, in a political system that isn't really built to accommodate snap elections, precisely because he hoped to catch Merkel on the wrong foot.



German economic reformer Merkel may well beat Schröder on Sept. 18

But Merkel's Christian Democratic Union and its parliamentary allies have been riding about 20 points higher than Schröder's side in recent polls. And Merkel, a dour 51-year-old pastor's daughter who was born in Hamburg but grew up in the former East Germany, offers the promise of such momentous change for her country and for Europe that Germany's neighbours can't afford to wait for her to win before they start trying to figure out what makes her tick.

In Paris, Merkel was careful to say nice things about the special relationship between France and Germany. But she emphasized that the two nations' other European neighbours can never take a back seat. As for the "Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis" that has seen Schröder and Chirac take common strategic stances with Russia's Vladimir Putin on assorted issues, she was positively frosty. Germany can no longer "go over Poland's head" when it pursues foreign policy. Any visitor to Poland could tell you that's precisely the complaint Poland's entire leadership class has levelled against Schröder. What's novel is that a potential German leader shares the same set of priorities.

It's in internal politics, though, that Merkel may bring the biggest changes. "What do I do in an economy where 1,000 full-time jobs disappear every day," she asked the *Financial Times*, "and where, at the same time, my entire social security system—pension, unemployment, health and nursing insurance—are financed by this shrinking pool of full-time jobs?"

What she plans to do is look to Germany's neighbours, not as threats but for examples. "If I look at Scandinavia, for instance, I see we still have a long way to go in decoupling our social security system from labour. If I look at central and eastern European countries, I see we still have a long way to go in reforming my tax system. And when I look at the U.K., I see I still have much to do to make my labour market more flexible."

While in Paris, Merkel also met Nicolas Sarkozy, the hot-headed French interior minister who will be the candidate to beat in the 2007 presidential election. (*Le Figaro* promptly dubbed the Merkel-Sarkozy summit "The Axis of Hopefuls.") Sarkozy is less of a darling among European reformers than Merkel, but he too has taken to pronouncing the odd bit of amazing self-diagnosis for France's ills. He recently called Britain "a leading light," and wondered aloud whether it was "France that is wrong and the world that is right."

P.W.

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foreign markets, you have to have access to the latest technology. That's why Sweden has always invested heavily—Swedish society and corporate Sweden—in R & D."

Indeed. Swedish spending on R & D, as a fraction of the economy, is nearly the highest in the world, more than double the comparable Canadian figure. Private-sector research spending per capita is more than triple the Canadian rate, largely concentrated in a few big research-intensive firms such as Ericsson and Volvo. Taxes, meanwhile, are relatively low, at least for businesses. The business tax rate is 28 per cent, 6.5 points lower than in the Netherlands and fully 12 points lower than in Germany. Canada's average corporate income tax rate, by comparison, is 32 per cent.

Sweden has also kept healthier budget books than most other European countries, running consecutive surpluses since 1998, unlike the rest of Europe—but like Canada. And Sweden started reforming its public pensions in 1999 to make them sustainable, unlike most of Europe—but like Canada. Still, Ingemar Hansson, the director general of Sweden's National Institute of Economic Research, has had a hard time explaining his country's "surprisingly" robust productivity growth. "It's far above the European average and closer to, and sometimes in excess of, U.S. development," he said. "Not only for single years, but over a 15-year period."

Hansson's hunch is that this has something to do with investments in public education and with the disproportionate place of information technology firms in Sweden's economy. A wired, educated workforce is a better guarantor of steady growth than a worried, defensive workforce.

Nobody claims Sweden has built the perfect economy. Several Swedes mentioned an unflattering paradox: they're the healthiest people in the world, but they called in sick to the tune of six million paid sick days a month last year. "There are signs the gatekeeping system isn't strong enough" to pay for Sweden's generous social benefits, Hansson said. Still, Sweden's mix of ancient strengths and recent reforms has left it well-placed to lead European reform—and to look around for allies.

Earlier this year, a prominent Swede made a lot of waves by identifying two. In an article in the *Financial Times*, former prime minister Carl Bildt wrote that "the forces of competition are probably increasing faster in Europe than anywhere else in the global economy." The 2004 enlargement put longstanding EU members in direct competition with hungry new members. Bildt singled out two: Estonia, which introduced a flat tax on income in 1994 and has been cutting it ever since, and Slovakia, which has taken the idea a radical step farther with its 19-per-cent tax. Neighbouring governments "can grumble as much as they like, and to little effect," Bildt wrote, "but for most it will be a question either of reforming their economy or starting to lose important parts of it."

Bildt's argument was put in blunter form in March 2004 by the head of Germany's chamber of industry and commerce, Ludwig Georg Braun, who said German firms shouldn't "wait for better policies" in their own country but set up shop in Eastern Europe instead. Many German firms were way ahead of him. Which is why a nice German guy like Norbert Gabriel is living in Slovakia these days.

Gabriel is the director of the Brose factory in the sprawling Lozorno industrial park northwest of Bratislava. Brose makes door systems for high-end luxury vehicles like the Volkswagen Touareg. The Lozorno operation never makes a door until its customers are at precisely the right point in the manufacture of their cars. For the 25-minute trip to the nearby Volkswagen assembly plant, the doors are loaded onto trucks whose side panels carry the inscription, in English, "Just In Time for Volkswagen SK." Similarly, Brose doesn't order parts to make its doors until it's ready to use them. Only two hours' stock of some key parts is kept on-site.

So a large expanse of the Slovak country side is a car-making supply chain of fearsome efficiency. Gabriel's men are paid according to a scheme by which more than a third of their potential paycheque is delivered in bonuses and incentives. Last year they delivered only 150 faulty parts per million, so far this year it's down to fewer than 10. No country in Europe can match this high-performance supply chain.

Which is pretty amazing when you consider that, until very recently, Slovak history was a succession of dreams deferred. The collapse of Communism at the end of 1989 gave way to squabbling between Slovaks and Czechs. A relatively amicable secession gave birth to the Slovak Republic in 1993. But Slovakia wasted five years under the authoritarian, pro-Russian regime of former prime minister Vladimir Meciar. In 1998, a year after Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic were invited to join NATO—but Slovakia was snubbed—fed-up voters turfed Meciar and installed Mikulas Dzurinda's reform coalition.

In many ways it was a rickety alliance. The most serious reforms had to wait until Dzurinda was re-elected, with a more stable government, in 2002. Slovakia has since made up for lost time, passing the low flat tax, overhauling pensions and dramatically cutting government spending. Now, evidence of the late start is all over the place. There's a slightly wild-frontier atmosphere in much of Slovakia. Over dinner, a half-dozen Canadians doing business there joked about how the thrill of having clients actually pay their bills hasn't yet faded.

But last September, the World Bank reported that of 145 countries it studied last year, none had done more than Slovakia to improve the climate for business. "The problem in Slovakia isn't high prices, it's low salaries," Pavol Rusko said. "If we want to improve this situation, we have to improve conditions for those who are generating resources"—business owners and their employees—"not for those who are distributing resources. Including politicians, of course."

Rusko's formula is simple. Work should be rewarded, not working should be discouraged. He even takes it to the international level. If it were up to him, he said, he'd cut Slovakia off, cold turkey, from the generous flow of catch-up money that is one of the principal benefits of being a new European Union member state. "It may be pleasant" to get money from Brussels, he said, "and we are not going to veto this. But we don't want to spend 90 per cent of our energy on what we can get out of Europe—we want to spend it on what we can produce ourselves."

Rusko displays the surprising fondness the new European reformers display for the European Union, even when they think its economic priorities are wrongheaded. North American eurosceptics, who suspect the EU is just a plot to rob red-blooded nations like Britain of their vital bodily fluids, enjoyed a good laugh when Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and other member states joined the U.S. "coalition of the willing" in support of the Iraq war. But disagreement with France is not a rejection of Europe. If anything, the new members may be the most enthusiastic Europeans. They simply want Europe to start doing its work differently.

One reason Rusko doesn't particularly like the money Brussels sends to his government's treasury is that so much of it

THE EU vs. CANADA

How economic prospects in the 25-nation EU compare with Canada's

	2005 projected GDP growth	Average growth 1996-2000
Latvia	7.2%	5.4%
Lithuania	6.4	4.2
Estonia	6.0	5.5
Ireland	4.9	9.8
Slovakia	4.9	3.7
Poland	4.4	5.1
Czech Republic	4.0	1.5
Hungary	3.9	4.0
Cyprus	3.9	3.8
Luxembourg	3.8	7.1
Slovenia	3.7	4.3
Finland	3.3	4.7
Sweden	3.0	3.2
Greece	2.9	3.4
Britain	2.8	3.2
Spain	2.7	3.9
Canada	**2.5**	**4.1**
Denmark	2.3	2.7
Belgium	2.2	2.7
Austria	2.1	2.9
France	2.0	2.7
Malta	1.7	4.5
Italy	1.2	1.9
Portugal	1.1	3.9
Netherlands	1.0	3.7
Germany	0.8	1.8

COMPILED BY PATRICIA TREBLE
ALL PERCENTAGE CHANGES EXCLUDE INFLATION
SOURCES: EUROPEAN COMMISSION (IN CONSTANT PRICES); STATISTICS CANADA (REAL GDP AT MARKET PRICES); CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA FORECAST



'A COUNTRY LIKE SWEDEN HAS SO MUCH TO BENEFIT AND GAIN FROM GLOBALIZATION'

—KAI HAMMERICH, president of the Invest in Sweden Agency

The Estonian capital, Tallinn: the country has successfully focused on high tech

IAN BARRY/MAGNUM PHOTOS



FIGHTER FROM A PEACEABLE LAND

HOW DOES a small country position itself at the forefront of engineering? How does it show that its industries can beat the best the world has to offer?

Sweden has an answer that will be oddly familiar to many Canadians. Sweden designs and builds jet fighter aircraft. Depending who you ask—although it probably helps if you ask a Swede—the JAS-39 Gripen may be the best light weight multi-role fighter in the world, designed for interception, ground attack and reconnaissance. It's built by a joint-venture group, Saab-BAE Systems Gripen AB. Saab and British Aerospace have equal shares, but Saab is the project's system integrator, ensuring that components from a half-dozen countries work together in the most demanding circumstances imaginable.

Sweden cherishes its neutrality—the country sat out both world wars—but the Swedes have long made a habit of carrying a big stick. For more than a half-century Sweden has preferred its own fighters—Tunnan, Lansen, Draken, Viggen—to imports. And Sweden has sold Gripen fighters to South Africa, Hungary and the Czech Republic, sometimes beating strong competition from U.S. and French systems. Spinoffs from Gripen technology have helped contractors, including Saab and Ericsson, keep their competitive edge in their civilian operations. "Today you have four, five nations in the world with this kind of capability," Kai Hammerich, president of the Invest in Sweden Agency, said. "The U.S., Russia, U.K., France and Sweden. The whole chain from start to end."

Sweden's Gripen suggests where Canada's Avro Arrow might have led

Any resemblance to the Avro Arrow project—which would have given Canada its own homegrown fighter capability but which John Diefenbaker cancelled in 1959—is purely coincidental. Today it may make perfect sense for Canada to stay out of fighter production. But Sweden's Gripen is a handy reminder that small countries can set themselves the most formidable technical challenges, and get in the habit of meeting those challenges again and again, if they only decide to do so. P.W.

comes from France and Germany. "The Germans and French are actually paying their strongest competitors. If we want the EU to be competitive against the U.S. or Japan or China, the strongest economies must function. We cannot be interested in the stagnation of the French or Italians or Germans."

Which is precisely why business as usual in Europe pains Rusko so. "In its current form, it's not sustainable. It's centralized, bureaucratized, over regulated." He recalled the "hundreds, thousands and thousands of experts" the EU shipped to Bratislava to tell the Slovaks how to prepare their economy for accession. "As it turned out, it would be better if they had stayed home and given advice to their own governments. Because the new member states were much better prepared for the enlargement than the old members."

Martin Bruncko, a 28-year-old U.S.-educated adviser to Finance Minister Ivan Miklos, takes Rusko's argument one step farther. "I would say more than that. Not only should the experts have stayed home, but the countries that have actually implemented reforms, instead of only talking, should send our own experts west to tell them what to do." Yet even Bruncko worries that the Slovak boom may not last. There will always be lower-cost jurisdictions to park a factory and save a little on wages. Maybe Romania next year, or India or who knows where. "Probably we'll stay competitive for the next 10 years. But in the long term, it may not be sustainable. Countries will be successful because they create innovative value, rather than cheaply producing goods created elsewhere."

Ingrid Brockova, a World Bank representative in Slovakia, agrees. Despite recent attempts to step up scientific and industrial R&D and reform the country's higher education system, Slovakia still lags badly in its attempts to build a modern knowledge economy, she said. It's an argument that clearly irks Rusko. "We don't need somebody to tell us we need to deal with the knowledge-based economy. We need somebody who would help us secure enough resources so we can do all we need. If Slovakia didn't have to pay unemployed people or social benefits, but could spend on new technologies, this might make sense. Of course, you can't skip steps."

A few days later and several hundred kilometres to the north, Mart Laar shook his head sadly in the cellar of a Tallinn café. "I know they say that in Slovakia. But they are wrong. They must start." Laar was a 32-year-old historian when he became Estonia's prime minister in 1992. The tiny country, across the Gulf of Finland from, well, Finland, has had a longer run of freedom and democracy than Slovakia. But along with its Baltic neighbours Lithuania and Latvia, Estonia started further back. The Baltic republics had their sovereignty stolen in 1940 by the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin. They were, against their will, part of the Soviet Union until it collapsed in 1991. Decades of slaughter and repression had destroyed much of the Estonian population. Too many people disappeared into the nondescript KGB headquarters at 59 Pikk St.—the tallest building in Estonia, it was said, because from the cellar you could see Siberia.

Then the Estonians had their freedom and very little else. "We were completely dumb," Laar said. "Not only did we know nothing about the modern economy, we knew nothing about modern technology. We lived in the Stone Age. We were 50 years or more behind the world." Laar and his government set to work. "I was 32. The minister of defence was 27 and the minister of justice was 28 and the minister of foreign affairs was 26. We did not know exactly what is possible and what is not. It means that we did a lot of things that were known to be not possible. Also, I didn't know anything about economics."

The Estonian transition was shorter, sharper, nastier—and in the medium term, far more lucrative—than any other former Communist state's transition to a market economy. All subsidies to business were eliminated. All tariffs were dropped (until Estonia joined the EU and, paradoxically, had to adopt common EU tariffs against exports from outside). And, crucially, Estonia implemented a high tech, high-skills "big bang" that was simultaneous with its market reform "big bang."



Blair has made reform of the EU's decrepit institutions a priority for the rest of the year

Estonians made heavy use of public-private partnerships to leverage the state's tiny resources into big results.

One of the most far-sighted projects was the "tiger leap" program. In six years Estonia wired 98 per cent of the nation's schools to the Internet. "There were harsh dilemmas," Ivar Tallo, executive director of Estonia's e-Governance Academy, said. "Invest in school roofs because water is dripping down, or invest in computers? And we chose the latter. It's paid off because this new generation has grown up with competitive skills. Whereas if we had repaired the roof, there might have been less humidity in the class, but that's it."

Estonians today use the Internet more than the French do. Much of the country is a Wi-Fi Internet hotspot. This year more than 70 per cent of Estonians filed their income taxes online. Most important, the memory of the Pikk Street atrocities has driven Estonia's leaders to use technology to grind away the gap between what a government can know about its citizens and what citizens can know about their government. There may be no more transparent government on Earth. Within 15 minutes after Estonia's cabinet starts meeting, minutes appear on the Internet. Citizens can see all government records of themselves online—along with a list of any government employee who has tried to see those records.

Estonia has done robust business exporting its flat-tax policies, first to its Baltic neighbours and now across central and eastern Europe, and its techniques for promoting transparent government. Estonian IT expertise helped develop the Kazaa file sharing software platform and the Skype voice-over-Internet chat system. Almost incredibly, Estonia has carved out a leadership niche in cutting-edge genomics research by developing a massive database of Estonians' genetic characteristics. If Sweden leads with high skills and Slovakia with low costs, Estonia so far has managed to do both.

Mart Laar resigned as prime minister and sits these days as a simple MP, so he doesn't chat with Tony Blair as often as he used to. But he knows from their earlier exchanges that the current European moment is unusually propitious. Blair has spent his career as prime minister trying to make Britons more European and to make Europe friendlier for people who share Britain's ideas about the role of government. Now, and only until the end of the year, he has the enormous leverage the EU presidency offers. As if with an eye to that narrow window of opportunity, Europe grew only last year to accommodate a handful of countries that share Blair's goals and admire his method. "It really is like the cavalry came over the hill at the last minute," Laar said.

'INVEST IN LEAKY SCHOOL ROOFS OR INVEST IN COMPUTERS? WE CHOSE THE LATTER.'

—IVAR TALLO, executive director of Estonia's e-Governance Academy

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DOOMSDAY HAS BEEN POSTPONED

The world's population growth is slowing down



SOMETIME LATER this year the world's population should reach 6 5 billion people That's an increase of 400 million in just five years, and the count continues to rise. The best estimate from the United Nations Population Division suggests there will be 9 1 billion people in the world by 2050 For many, the number may seem incomprehensibly huge But alarmingly large? That's a value judgment—and it's often where any discussion of global population ends up

Alarming is the very word many environmentalists might use. The idea that population growth is responsible for much of the world's ills was popularized by the 1968 publication of *The Population Bomb* by Stanford University biologist Paul Ehrlich. With its doomsday scenario predicting hundreds of millions of deaths from overpopulation, the book was a runaway bestseller But researchers who crunch numbers for a living—economists, demographers and the like—tend to see population issues in a very different light. They look to the reams of empirical data showing that the worldwide supply of food and other resources has not only kept pace with population growth, but prices for many crucial commodities have dropped in relative terms

A key difference in the two perspectives, says Tom Wonnacott, professor emeritus of statistics at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ont , is faith in human inventiveness "This is not a question of whether your politics are to the right or left," he says, "but whether you believe in people"

That's not to deny that poverty in the developing world and habitat destruction are serious problems But in this world view, the root causes can be found in inequity, inequality and wrong-headed government policies, not numbers per se "If everyone acted responsibly," says Wonnacott, "the evidence shows the world could support a much larger population."

> The increase in Canada's population is from immigration, not procreation

It may not have to As it turns out, the *rate* of growth has peaked. From a high of 2 04 per cent for 1965-70, the annual global growth rate has fallen to 1 21 per cent since 2000 Overall numbers will continue to grow for decades because the large population base means even a tiny percentage increase translates into tens of millions each year But if current trends continue, the global population will stabilize and even start to shrink. It could happen by the close of the 21st century or earlier, depending on whose statistical models you believe

The populations of some nations have already started to decrease, thanks in large part to plummeting fertility rates Each woman needs to produce an average of 2 1 children to maintain what is known as the replacement rate (it's more than two, because some children die before adulthood) Forty-four developed countries already have fertility rates below the replacement level—as do 23 developing countries (Canada's fertility rate is 1 53 per cent, but immigration keeps the population growing) Researchers attribute declining rates to many factors, including the improving status of women (the better educated tend to have fewer children) and increasing urbanization (having many children, an asset to the rural poor, is a liability in the city) The U S Census Bureau, which also tracks international statistics, predicts the world's fertility level will drop below replacement level by 2050.

So-called depopulation poses its own problems. The average age of the nation rises, and the proportion of the elderly increases This puts puts a strain on those still working and on the pension, health care and social security systems Looking ahead to Europe's looming crisis, the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, which meets once every four years, devoted a full day to the issue at its recent conference.

Alan Simmons, a York University professor who is wrapping up seven years on the union's board of directors, is concerned He agrees depopulation is serious But it's no excuse, he says, for rich countries like Canada to back away from their various commitments to help poor nations with their development goals, including gender equality, reproductive health rights for women, and increased access to education. "These," says Simmons, "are the big problems for the next 30 to 40 years" The once-feared population bomb may be in the process of being defused, but it's still no time for complacency

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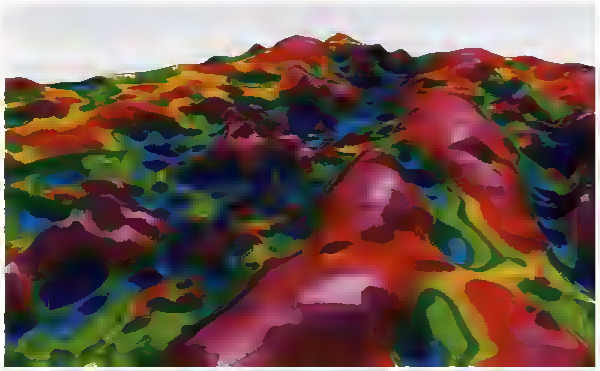
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PIXELS, NOT PICKAXES

Deskbound computer jockeys are the hottest thing in modern mining exploration





WHEN A CANADIAN mining company issued a global challenge to researchers in 2000 to find gold at an old mine in northern Ontario, Nicholas Archibald knew this was an opportunity not to be missed. But instead of pulling out his prospecting gear and heading into the bush at Goldcorp Inc.'s Red Lake property, the geologist, who'd never been to Canada, stayed home—on the other side of the world in West Perth, Australia. There, he and his team flicked on their computers and downloaded data posted on the Goldcorp website. That initiative would eventually put Archibald in the position he's in now: with a small group of geologists, geophysicists, geochemists and geological modellers, he is helping bring the mining industry into the technological era.

In a move that shocked the secretive world of mining, Goldcorp had revealed 50 years worth of data—everything it had—on Red Lake, a productive mine in the 1950s that by 2000 many considered depleted. Rob McEwen, then Goldcorp's CEO, suspected otherwise. But he needed new ideas about where to look for the site's remaining gold. After attending a conference where the buzz was about so-called open-source technology, McEwen realized he might get help using the same concept—that information made widely available allows many people to contribute ideas. He launched the challenge, and ran it like a reality TV show, eliminating participants along the way. Archibald's consulting firm, then called Fractal Graphics and now Geoinformatics Exploration Inc., used sophisticated software to create 3-D electronic models of underground rock formations, pinpointing five sites where they thought Goldcorp would find new veins of gold. The winner's take was peanuts—just US$105,000—but for Archibald the real prize would be exposure. Almost needless to say, he won the contest.

Geoinformatics uses computer models to reveal new information

Goldcorp followed up, and was rewarded with motherlodes in four of the five sites. In the 2½ years after the competition, as Goldcorp drilled and tested and eventually confirmed Geoinformatics' predictions, its share price more than quadrupled in value. Red Lake has emerged as the world's most lucrative gold mine—and it turned out to be a motherlode for Archibald, too (as part of its promotional material, Geoinformatics now includes a chart showing the dramatic rise of Goldcorp's stock following its winning submission). He's now been to Canada many times; not only has he opened offices in Vancouver and Toronto, he's just listed his company on the Toronto Stock Exchange, which, apart from being Canada's principal bourse, is world-renowned as a mining exchange.

At Geoinformatics' first annual general meeting, held mid-June in Toronto, Archibald spoke of the state of the industry—and the changes it is undergoing. Much of the mineral that's already been taken out of the ground was from deposits close to the surface. Mining companies have not been finding new, good quality exploration sites, he said. The cost of discovering them is prohibitive and takes too long. With the low success rates, said Archibald, who has the slightly unkempt look of a distracted professor, "crunch time is approaching."

Of course, that's where Geoinformatics comes in. Its computer models, which look like techno wizardry, combine decades-old data with the most recent information available. In a process pioneered by Archibald's firm, data is first translated from paper charts with numbers and written descriptions to electronic maps, which then are layered like a mille feuille one on top of the other to create an information-rich, 3-D underground landscape. Overlapping all the available data onto one map allows the geologists to follow common threads, explains Darren Holden, the company's Perth-based vice-president for geoscience. "What we're really doing is separating fact from mythology," he adds. "We follow the principle of least astonishment—the one that makes the most sense." Simply putting different sets of data together reveals new information, Archibald explains. It also works quickly. "We can do seven man-years of work in seven months. This isn't rocket science."

MANY of our great finds were the result of dumb luck or dogged excursions into the Canadian wilderness

Mining is among the world's oldest industries—and one of the last to enter the electronics age. In Canada, it's (pardon the pun) a foundation industry; a good chunk of the economy still depends on the rocks under the surface of the Canadian Shield. Historically, it's been a mystery laden, lore-filled sector: as much as the science of geology has informed prospectors, many of the great finds in our mining history were the result of dumb luck and/or dogged, limb-numbing excursions into the Canadian wilderness. The stereotype of a grizzled, cranky prospector hooked up with a smooth-talking promoter is as close to the truth as anything—and for Archibald, that's all wrong. "The brutal reality is it's going to be science and technology that's going to deliver value, not Ouija boards," he says.

Not that Geoinformatics researchers don't use some of the same tricks as the old-time prospectors. On his computer screen, Holden has a tract of land mapped out with peaks and valleys, which are colour-coded in bright hues. Electronically, he shines a light across the map, creating shadows, and then with his mouse, rotates the direction of the spotlight. The light—with its shadows—shows up faults in the surface, just as the sun does as it falls across the surface of the Earth. Faults are important, Holden explains, because they channel water that's been trapped for eons in the Earth's core. As the water gushes through a fault zone, it carries dissolved minerals, which become deposits or a vein of mineral. In the past, Holden points out, good geologists would return at different times during the day to spots they were prospecting, to see where the sun cast its shadows. They, too, were looking for fault lines.

Some of the old data is more complete than current data, Holden says. Geologists used to write out their findings by hand and, depending on the author, some descriptions included flowing passages of prose. But a downside to this interpretive style, says Archibald, is that the same rock was sometimes called by different names. For the Goldcorp competition, Archibald's team combined 35 maps of horizontal information going down more than a kilometre into the Earth, plus the results from 6,000 drill holes (which produce five- to 10-cm cylinders of rock from the core). Most people would have taken the Goldcorp maps and printed them, Holden says. Instead, his group integrated them electronically, and saw that an ancient fault line had split and then shifted veins of gold to areas that hadn't been mined.

Winning the Goldcorp challenge gave Geoinformatics "an instant badge in North America," Archibald says. "We came uncluttered." And it opened doors—widely. Today, Geoinformatics has alliances with a dozen different mining groups around the world, and has taken equity stakes in many of their projects. "We're part of the adaptive process of taking tried-and-true practices and translating them into modern technology," says Archibald. He's always been fascinated by the dilemma of how to predict what's underground, he says. Now, by mining data before mining stakes, he's sure technology will provide the answers.

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A BRAIN DRAIN TO ALBERTA?

Oil wealth means the province can attract the best minds in Canada

CANADA'S INVESTMENT Dealers Association held its annual meeting in Banff at the end of June, officially to recognize Alberta's 100th anniversary, but mostly to consider the evidence that the next century will be Alberta's. The gathering gave us a close up look at former provincial treasurer Jim Dinning, widely viewed as the successor to Ralph Klein whenever that formidable presence rides into the sunset. In the interim, Dinning cools his heels as chairman of a local financial services company, and he used a slug of his allotted time to hymn his company's virtues. A skilled pitchman, he doubtless convinced many in the room to call their offices at the break and buy the stock.

When he switched to what was listed as a review of Alberta's first century, we learned why he's considered a hot political commodity. One characteristic of a successful politician is the ability to turn discussion of any topic into a stump speech, and the history we heard was mostly of Alberta's generosity to the rest of Canada, in the face of sustained snubbing from Ottawa. Dinning said this had to change, because Alberta is now too important to Canada's economy to be ignored. Dinning's no parochial crypto-separatist. "Alberta doesn't want out," he said, "it wants in."

His resentment at a history of rejection by Ottawa that continues to the present day was ill-concealed, but that didn't vitiate his effectiveness: anyone recalling such low points as the Trudeau Liberals' National Energy Policy of the 1980s would have found him persuasive. Whether he convinced many that any federal government marching to the priorities of opinion elites in Ontario and Quebec will ever be persuaded to respect Alberta or its Ottawa representatives was, however, unclear.

Dinning put down one marker that could prove important in the light of the Supreme Court's recent decision on access to private health care in Quebec. He wants Alberta to become the centre of Canada's medical research and experimentation in new health care techniques. Given what we heard later at the conference about the astounding wealth the province will generate from oil and gas, the implications for the relative standing of established research and health care organizations in other provinces are significant. If Alberta creates the best-funded clinics for Canadians to bypass health queues, and the best-funded biotech and pharmaceutical clusters in the country, a new kind of intra-Canadian brain drain will inevitably emerge.



The discovery of oil at Leduc in 1947 fuelled the growth of Canada's strongest economy

The conference also got a memorable helping of Albertan optimism and achievement when Jim Gray spoke on the energy panel. One of the province's heroes, Gray is a great geologist who built a first-class company—Canadian Hunter—on his unwavering belief in the value of deep reserves of natural gas.

Gray reviewed an important new book on Saudi oil reserves, *Twilight in the Desert*, by American oil industry analyst Matthew Simmons. He focused on the author's discussion of the aging process at just one oil field—Saudi Arabia's massive Ghawar. This has been the world's biggest oil field since it started production in 1951—four years after the discovery of oil at Leduc gave birth to Alberta's domestic industry. Ghawar's scale is majestic: five times the size of the second-biggest field (Mexico's Cantarell), it produces six to seven per cent of the world's total output. But it's old.

Ghawar has been showing signs of age in recent years, as have all the other major oil fields of Saudi Arabia. Gray, who sports a big shock of white hair, was cheerful about his own advanced age, admitting there are many things he no longer does as well as he once did. (Explaining how he's managed to accomplish so much, he revealed that he doesn't play golf, which means, compared to other executives, "I have an eight-day week.")

Oil wells, he said, are like people: when they get old, they slow down and are prone to health problems. They can get science-based help to keep going, but they will never again be able to perform as they did when they were young. Once the easy oil has been pumped, the amount that can be produced at moderate prices will shrink inexorably. Gray, like Simmons and many other informed observers, believes Ghawar is past its peak and is vulnerable to the decay that besets aging oil fields. Year by year, it takes more effort, expense and ingenuity to arrest the rate of production decline, and the field becomes more subject to serious breakdowns, mostly from the influx of subterranean water, oil's greatest enemy.

That's bad news for oil consumers, but good news for Alberta. As output from Ghawar and other aging fields falls, the oil from the comparatively modest new oil fields the Saudis are developing will not threaten today's high global price structure that makes Alberta's resources so profitable. That's because most of the new production will merely replace declining output from established fields, and because those new fields are higher-cost than the monsters that gave the Saudis control of world prices. In 1986, Saudi Arabia, which had millions of barrels of shut-in production, smashed oil prices by two-thirds to US$10 a barrel, just by opening the spigots on a few monster oil fields. The industry (other than Gray and a few other iconoclasts) was, until recently, haunted by that memory.



DINNING, the heir apparent, wants Alberta to become the centre of experimentation in new health care techniques

Gray then led us through an analysis of the next 25 years of the Alberta oil sands. Today, the region is pumping one million barrels of oil a day. By 2030, he expects, that figure will be five million, and will dwarf what will remain of Canadian conventional oil production. But getting there will be tough for the oil companies who have to find the cash, people, technology and machinery for the biggest mining enterprises the world has ever seen.

And living there will be even tougher for the people who will form a community amid sustained boom conditions. The classic boom and bust cycles of the mining and oil industries had one agreeable aspect: the cooling-off periods gave the communities time to catch their breath and manage the social and economic problems the windfall era had generated. For those people in Fort McMurray already struggling with the problems created by a cancerous growth rate, Gray's forecast is ominous.

That's why Gray spent most of his talk addressing the infrastructure needs of the oil sands region, proposing a new dual transportation corridor from Edmonton to Fort McMurray, including a high speed rail connection (like the Siemens line now operating in China) and a superhighway. Gray wants to make Fort McMurray "a farther-out suburb of Edmonton."

This was the big New Idea of the conference, and it was left to your reporter, the final speaker, to spell out how such a visionary project could be organized and financed at zero cost to taxpayers, and without burdening the oil companies with extra up-front capital spending liabilities. The financing models? Ontario's Highway 407 and other so-called public-private partnerships, known as PPPs. The financiers? Pension funds and retirees desperate for high-quality, long-term, inflation-hedged bonds. The Canadian aging process will finance the infrastructure needed to produce at least some of the world's oil, that will replace supplies no longer available from aging Saudi wells.

This relatively young province, therefore, looks to be Canada's biggest winner from three kinds of aging: rising age-related demand for Canadians' health care, rising demand for its oil, and rising demand for the specialized financial products that will help underwrite the next 50 years of oil sands output.

Alberta's second century is off to a great start. M

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ROGERS Your World Right Now

HOODIA LOVE

An appetite suppressant used by Bushmen is the diet world's newest fad

IN THE 1980 FILM *The Gods Must Be Crazy*, a San Bushman in the Kalahari Desert stumbles across a Coke bottle that has been tossed from a passing plane. The experience introduces the San to the modern world, warts and all. Today, the San of southern Africa are sharing something of their world with the West—a prickly, cucumber-like plant called hoodia gordonii—pronounced hoo-dee-uh gore-doh-nee. The San eat hoodia to suppress their appetite on long desert treks. And somewhere someone got the bright idea that if it works for desert-dwelling aborigines like the San, it might be just the drug for pudgy North American couch potatoes trying to stave off that last litre of Häagen-Dazs. As a result, hoodia has suddenly become one of the hottest diet trends to hit the lucrative weight-loss scene with promoters like Anna Nicole Smith, former Playboy Playmate of the Year and dubious cultural icon, who shills for a hoodia-based pill called Trimspa X32. Her fluctuating corpulence well established, Smith says she lost 70 lb. with the help of the capsules. And yet, no one really knows whether hoodia actually works.



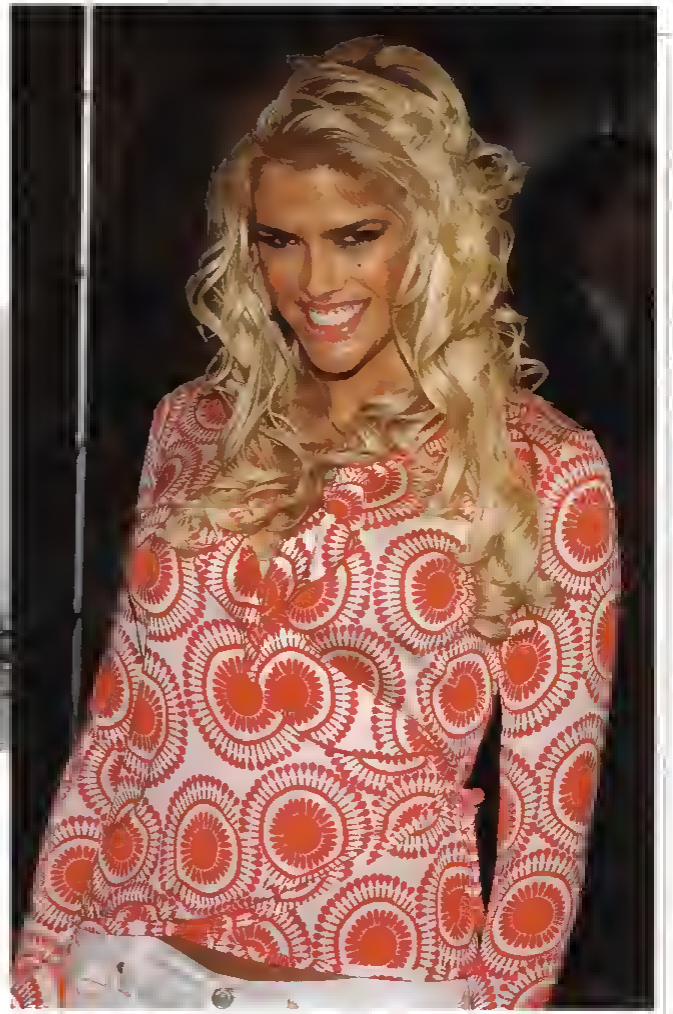
The stars of *The Gods Must Be Crazy* and Smith: a common cause?

At the Canadian Health Food Association trade show in Vancouver in April, hoodia was "definitely in the top five of what was being promoted as the next Holy Grail," notes Allison McCutcheon, a medicinal botanist at the University of British Columbia. What is making it so popular at the moment is the unmistakable whiff of plausibility. The San have been around forever. They obviously know a thing or two about indigenous plants. "There's an ethno-botany behind hoodia that gives you some reason to think maybe there's something here," says McCutcheon. "On the other hand, when I look at the science, I'm amazed at the types of claims that are being made."

Where things get really complicated is when hoodia is refined, packaged in capsules and sold on the Internet, or in health food stores. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration says a number of companies—including Trimspa, the one Smith represents (its parent is Goen Technologies Corp. of Cedar Knolls, N.J.)—have failed to convince the regulator that their hoodia-based products are safe. If it really feels the pill is unsafe, the FDA can mount a court challenge against Goen to force X32 off the market, although as a matter of practice the FDA won't comment on the likelihood of that occurring. Meanwhile, Health Canada hasn't approved any hoodia products for sale and says it plans to investigate whether Trimspa's X32 is okay for consumers. Trimspa has been getting its message out with ads—some of which have run in this magazine—featuring a svelte Smith in a wetsuit with a surfboard. A Health Canada spokeswoman said the department will have a close look at the advertising claims.

Many natural health products must now bear Health Canada's stamp of approval, in the form of a natural product number (NPN). Distributors of plant materials such as pure hoodia have until June 2006 to apply for an NPN. But X32 also contains additives like glucosamine—a newly regulated drug. As such, X32 falls in the category that is supposed to conform right away.

Ottawa, however, is currently facing a huge backlog in its review process and can't keep up with all the concoctions flooding the market. "It's another gun registry," says Jen Cully, owner of Millennium Health Supplements Inc., a small Bowmanville, Ont.-based distributor of hoodia. She's convinced her additive-free hoodia poses no risk—and bases this on having given it to friends and taking it herself. "I've taken as many as 30 of these capsules a day," says Cully, "because when we first got this we didn't want to kill anyone." For its part, Trimspa is convinced it's done nothing wrong, and has complied fully with all applicable Canadian rules and regulations for a natural health product, says Chrissy Kulig, a Goen spokeswoman.



The Canadian market for over-the-counter diet aids, including appetite suppressants, is worth more than $91 million a year, according to market research firm ACNielsen Canada. With big money at stake, and an increasingly overweight population desperate for easy answers, the hoodia market is ripe for abuse, warns UBC's McCutcheon, who is also president of the Natural Health Products Research Society of Canada. When prices rise, as they have, people have more incentive to cheat, she says. (A case in point: in July, Canadian researchers reported finding the key ingredients in Viagra and Cialis—prescription drugs that can cause heart failure when taken with certain other drugs—in herbal remedies for erectile dysfunction.) "A lot of what's in the market isn't really hoodia," warns McCutcheon, "or if it is, it's hoodia cut with God knows what else."

For their part, hoodia distributors are becoming increasingly more responsible, says Sidney Sudberg, director of Alkemists Pharmaceuticals Inc., an independent lab in Costa Mesa, Calif. "Basically, many vendors are testing before they buy, and then after they receive shipment, to be sure they actually have hoodia," says Sudberg. Still, it's buyer beware. Over the past year, Sudberg's facility has screened more than 100 hoodia samples and found as many as half fail quality standards. "Hoodia's too hot an item to be lax about," warns Sudberg. "It's an easy target for crooks."

John—who asked not to be identified by his real name—swears by hoodia. Until recently, the 53-year-old grocery store employee in Nova Scotia weighed 345 lb. After some online searching, he bought 60 capsules for $55. Three weeks after taking one pill in the morning and another at night, he had lost 20 lb. John, however, coupled his hoodia intake with the low-carb Atkins diet. "I've eaten my two small meals—in the morning and at suppertime—and that's it," says John. But how does he know it's the pills? "I've dieted many times," says John. "I know myself and I'm always hungry. If you can't lose weight with hoodia, it's not likely you will ever lose it—it's really that good."

But is it? The only available scientific studies are based on animal research with, some say, only limited application to humans. Still, in 2003, the San people were able to strike a revenue-sharing agreement with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Pretoria. The CSIR holds the patent to a chemical compound called P57, suspected of being the active ingredient in hoodia. The two groups in turn reached a development deal with Phytopharm in Britain. That drug maker then did the same with Pfizer, the New York-based pharmaceutical giant. Pfizer has since abandoned hoodia research after middling lab results. But Unilever, one of the world's biggest manufacturers of brand-name foods, has stepped up in its place.

Not everyone is a happy customer. Vi Ashcroft, 50, is a Calgary mom who bought two bottles of hoodia for about $130. She took two capsules before each meal. "I have about 15 lb. that I would like to get rid of," says Ashcroft. "I took it for almost four weeks, and didn't feel a thing. In fact, it made me feel nauseous now and then." Her advice? "Save your money." Many desperate dieters won't, of course, and they'll have no trouble finding those happy to take their cash. M

COLUMBIA PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES

NICOLAS KHAYAT/ABACA

HERBAL FIX

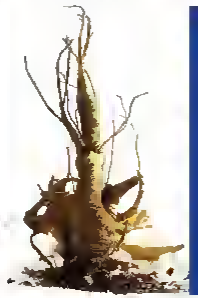
JOHN GEDDES asks whether Ottawa's regulators have bitten off too much

REGULATING NATURAL health products sure sounds like an idea whose time has come. Canadians are avid consumers of naturally derived remedies and supplements—from echinacea to ward off colds, to glucosamine to limber up arthritic knees. In early 2000, the federal government took stock of the trend and set up a new branch of Health Canada to license the estimated 50,000 natural products sold as health-boosters. New regulations finally came into force last year. But the bid to bring order to the marketplace for products concocted of everything from shark cartilage to cactus spines has turned into a regulatory logjam. Thousands of applications have been submitted, but only a few hundred licences granted. And while federal officials insist the pace is picking up, some outside observers argue the system is hopeless under the current rules.

Businesses and industry lobby groups are demanding immediate changes to ease the red-tape burden and speed up the process. "I'm in favour of what the regulations were supposed to do," says Barrie Carlsen, president of Burnaby, B.C.-based Enerex Botanicals Ltd., a dietary supplements company. "But they need to be relaxed. Something has to give." He says Enerex has applied for licences for 35 products in the year and a half since the rules came into effect, but Health Canada has granted only three so far. And that experience is typical. While the department's new Natural Health Products Directorate has received 8,180 applications, it has managed to issue only 522 licences. And the work is only starting: more than 30,000 more applications are expected over the next two years as regulations are phased in to cover a larger number of categories.

The huge gap between the trickle of approvals and the flood of applications makes the problem look insurmountable. Yet Robin Marles, manager of the directorate's research and science division, maintains the workload is being brought under control. He blames the backlog mainly on the need to recruit and train specialists to assess the vast range of products up for review. "We got off to a little slower start than we had anticipated," Marles says. "We've basically doubled in size each of the last three years." The directorate's staff now numbers about 160. But industry skeptics say not nearly enough reviewers have been hired to plow through the mountain of claims and evidence currently on the table—let alone the even heavier and more complex workload that lies ahead. "Short of giving them another 100 reviewers, there is no solution," said David Skinner, president of NDMAC, an industry group formerly known as the Nonprescription Drug Manufacturers Association of Canada. "They need to go back and take a hard look at the regulations."

Those regulations are unlike any others. They represent the government's attempt to bring cutting-edge R & D and thousand-year-old lore under a single regime. Take, for example, ginseng, the plant whose root has an ancient reputation for healing, now backed up by science. Edmonton-based CV Technologies Inc. has a hit with its COLD-fX capsules, made from an extract of chemicals found in North American ginseng. The company applied to Health Canada for its natural product licence and was issued one on the basis of extensive clinical testing that showed the capsules were effective in combatting the common cold. For a new natural product like COLD-fX, scientific support is required to show that it does what it's supposed to and is safe to use—similar to what's demanded for the approval of non-natural drugs and prescription medicines.



Ginseng root is the prime ingredient in COLD-fX, a popular remedy that has undergone extensive testing

GETTY IMAGES

But ginseng sold in a traditional form will be reviewed according to an entirely different standard. "One of the big advantages of our regulations is the ability of the manufacturer to label products based on a traditional healing paradigm," Marles says. "They don't all have to be based on pharmacology." Under the schedule for phasing in the regulations, companies selling natural products that are plants, plant materials or extracts prepared by traditional methods don't have to apply for their licences until June 1, 2006. That key deadline will bring a wide range of time-honoured—but not necessarily scientifically verified—products under the directorate's scrutiny.

According to Health Canada's guidelines, companies selling products that have been in use for at least 50 years will have to provide "a written account of the relevant information from recognized authorities on traditional healing." The guidelines suggest "two or more herbalists or Aboriginal elders" as an example. But Marles says mandatory labels will make a clear distinction between the scientific evidence for, say, COLD-fX, and the traditions surrounding ginseng tea. Will consumers grasp the difference? After all, both COLD-fX and ginseng tea would bear a federal Natural Product Number, or NPN, on the label. "To the consumer," says Skinner, "it's a totally meaningless set of letters."



Enerex's Carlsen says he's in favour of Ottawa's new rules, but 'something has to give'

PHOTOGRAPH BY SHANNON MENDES

Even experts who solidly support the concept of licensing traditional medicines are doubtful of Health Canada's capacity to take on the task. Edmund Lui, an associate professor in the faculty of medicine, dentistry, physiology and pharmacology at the University of Western Ontario, questions how Ottawa will assess herbal products far removed from Western medicine. For instance, in Chinese tradition a single herb is rarely used, he says. Instead, healers prescribe blends, usually in combination with techniques like acupuncture. Also, Chinese traditionalists use terms for conditions and symptoms that don't correspond to Western science—and probably can't be translated. "I don't know how the directorate is going to handle all this," Lui said. "They don't have huge manpower and most of their people don't have much experience."

ONE problem is that only a handful of China's traditional medicine manufacturers meet international standards

Health Canada has recruited experts in Chinese, North American First Nations and India's Ayurvedic medicine, among others, notes Marles. Still, he admits that "the most challenging category" will be those plant-based traditional medicines that don't come up for licensing until next June. Before then, another major regulatory deadline looms: all natural health companies must show by the end of this year that their products come from facilities, whether in Canada or abroad, that meet "good manufacturing" standards. For many, that will prove a major hurdle to clear. Lui said an estimated 3,400 different Chinese medicines are sold in Canada—but only a small percentage of China's traditional medicine manufacturers comply with internationally recognized standards.

In theory, many companies whose products or plants don't get licences could be forced out of the Canadian market. A crackdown, however, would require an extensive inspection and enforcement effort. And for now, the directorate is generally allowing products to be sold as long as the companies marketing them have applied for the necessary licences, even if a final verdict might take many months. That leaves the companies in an uncomfortable limbo—not approved, not rejected, not sure when to expect a decision. Consumers are in an equally awkward position—some products licensed, most not, making reliable label-to-label comparisons among them impossible. Marles says all this will be sorted out by the end of 2007, when every product that needs a licence must have one. But critics scoff when Health Canada says it will meet that final deadline. Just as when choosing a natural health product, it's hard to know whose claims to believe.



Interview | INDIRA SAMARASEKERA

'THERE ISN'T ANOTHER PROVINCE THAT CAN THINK 20 YEARS OUT'

IN A YEAR OF RAPID change at several of Canada's top universities, the University of Alberta's new president, Indira Samarasekera, took over from predecessor Rod Fraser on July 1. Samarasekera (SAM-er-a-SAKE-er-a) was born in Sri Lanka and spent the past five years as vice-president of research at the University of British Columbia. She arrived in Edmonton on the heels of an Alberta budget that substantially increased funding for universities and research. *Maclean's* columnist Paul Wells spoke with her in Edmonton.

Why is there so much optimism these days at the University of Alberta?

The province has stated a clear intention to reinvest in the post-secondary sector with a 20-year vision. There isn't another provincial government in this country that can actually think 20 years out, the way Alberta is boldly doing. And it has identified four pillars as being part of that vision: leading in learning; unleashing innovation; competing in the global marketplace; making Alberta the best place to live, work and visit. When I first saw these four pillars last year, I said, 'Show me the money.' And this budget does. It will position Alberta as a hotbed for research that's second to none in Canada and perhaps one of the leading jurisdictions in North America.

Some people have argued that, after several years of major investments in higher education, Ottawa has taken its eye off the ball.

I don't think so, because I think it clearly understands the relationship between the challenges on the productivity side, and talent coming out of universities on the other side. The question is, what investments, where? How do we ensure that undergrad students, particularly in research-intensive institutions, benefit from being there? How do we ensure that undergraduate students get the learning experiences that allow them to contribute as citizens? Only one per cent of Canadian students have any form of international experience. There's an opportunity for the federal government.

David Emerson, the federal industry minister, has named you to a blue-chip task force on commercializing university research, along with the Toronto financier Joe Rotman and others. You're supposed to report this autumn. How's it going?

We're quite far along. This is not a wheel that has to be reinvented. There is an enormous amount of knowledge out there—many countries have done this successfully. I think the real problem is people have a very narrow sense that commercialization is about taking discoveries and making some product or widget or gizmo out of them. Our most effective form of knowledge transfer is the people who walk out the door. So our challenge is to ensure that our graduate students and undergrads have the skills, the entrepreneurship, to transmit knowledge.

You're the 12th president of this university and the first woman. Will that make you a different kind of president?

It's less related to gender than to the individual's own life experiences. I will be different because there is no other president who has had my set of life experiences. I've been educated in four countries, I'm an engineer by training, I've consulted around the world, I've been a vice-president of research at one of Canada's premier universities. Am I going to be different? Absolutely.

Is there anywhere to get a decent meal on the U of A campus?

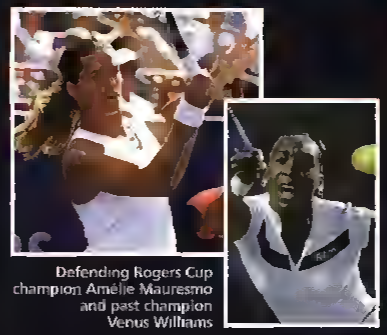
Oh yeah. The student union building here? Fabulous. I love the pizza there, at Funky Pickle. Not good for my waistline, but I've been indulging in Funky Pickle quite regularly. M

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN ULAN/EPIC PHOTOGRAPHY INC.

ROGERS cup 2005
WOMEN'S TENNIS AT ITS BEST
REXALL CENTRE • TORONTO • AUGUST 13–21

Advantage, Rexall Centre
Playing host to the world's best tennis

Rivalries Renewed
Justine, Serena, Maria, Amélie and Venus go head to head



Defending Rogers Cup champion Amélie Mauresmo and past champion Venus Williams

Can Mauresmo Repeat in 2005?
Not if Russian teen tennis sensation Maria Sharapova (left) has her way

Who's Hot?
These top players are on fire

Enter to WIN a VIP Package to the 2005 Rogers Cup!

TENNIS CANADA



ROGERS cup 2005

Women's tennis at its best

American wunderkind Tracy Austin, the 1981 Canadian tennis champion and former World No. 1, was one of the greatest players ever to grace a court. This year, she will be delivering television commentary for TSN and CBC at the Rogers Cup, presented by American Express

"As a former champion of this prestigious event, I want fans to know how special the Rogers Cup is to the players who compete here. I know it was to me. In 1981, I came to Toronto after a five-month layoff due to a back injury. The fans in Toronto were so nice, and the tournament organizers made everything so easy for the players. One day, a fan gave me a bunny rabbit pin for good luck—and lucky it was. I put it on my sweater and beat Pam Shriver, Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert to win the Canadian title. I wore that lucky charm when I went on to win the U.S. Open a couple of weeks later. The confidence I got from winning in Toronto propelled me to win my first Grand Slam.

"This year, the stars of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour are in for a treat when they play for the first time at the world-class Rexall Centre. This is a state-of-the-art facility where fans can get up close to the players. The lineup of [illegible] champ Venus Williams is back, Maria Sharapova will contend for No. 1, Justine Henin-Hardenne just won the French, and Amélie Mauresmo will defend the title she is so proud to hold.

"So here's to a great week of tennis in one of the greatest cities in the world. See you there."

Tracy Austin





Former tennis superstar turned broadcaster Tracy Austin brings her knowledge and insights about the game to the Rogers Cup television audience

ROGERS cup 2005

Old rivalries renewed

All eyes will be on Toronto's Rexall Centre as the world's best women tennis players vie for the Rogers Cup and the chance to dethrone reigning champion Amélie Mauresmo

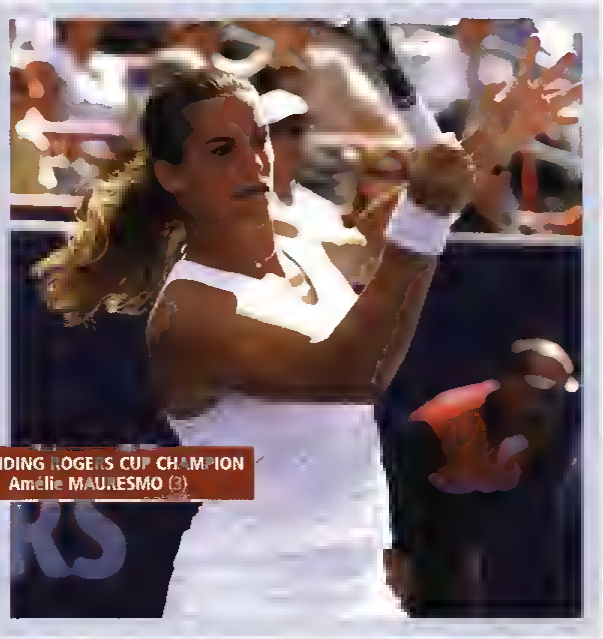
She's back! Amelie Mauresmo, reigning champion of the Rogers Cup, presented by American Express, is returning to defend her title. A perennial fan favourite in Canada and two-time winner of the event in 2002 and 2004, Mauresmo will be gunning for her third Rogers Cup title at the new Rexall Centre in Toronto, Aug. 13–21. But it won't be easy. With one of the strongest fields ever assembled for this stop on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour, all the big names in the game have their eyes on the prize. The Rogers Cup is the one they all want to win.

Widely considered the most stylish player in the women's game, Mauresmo is a superstar in her native France, with legions of loyal fans the world over. The grace, power and speed she possesses have invited comparisons

> **When I found out I was ranked No. 1 in the world, I just put my head in my hands and cried**

with Roger Federer, the reigning supernova of men's tennis.

Since playing her first professional tournament, in 1993, the 26-year-old Mauresmo has won 17 titles and more than $7 million in prize money. But her greatest thrill came last year, when she finally earned the No. 1 ranking in the world. "When I found out I was No. 1, I just put my head in my hands and cried. I was so proud!"



DEFENDING ROGERS CUP CHAMPION
Amélie MAURESMO (3)

A three-time semifinalist at Wimbledon, Mauresmo still hasn't reeled in the big fish of tennis, a Grand Slam title. But she inches ever closer to it. So expect her to be on her game in Toronto. And let the fireworks begin.

Date of Birth:	July 5, 1979
Birthplace:	St. Germains en Laye, France
Height:	5'9" (1.75 m)
Weight:	152 lbs. (69 kg)
Plays:	Right-handed
Career Singles Titles: 17 Grand Slams: 0	

The contenders

A stellar lineup will thrill fans at the battle for the Rogers Cup. Here are just a few players to watch.

Current WTA rankings in brackets



Maria SHARAPOVA (2)

Date of Birth	April 19, 1987
Birthplace	Nyagan, Russia
Height	6' (1.83 m)
Weight	130 lbs. (59 kg)
Plays	Right-handed
Grand Slam Singles Titles: 1	

Maria Sharapova is now officially the golden girl of tennis. Can't you tell? After capturing the 2004 Wimbledon at 17, she returned to the hallowed championships this year with 18-karat gold flecks embedded in her running shoes. Although she lost in the semis to eventual winner Venus Williams, advertisers know she is marketing magic—a cross between a runway supermodel and Michael Jordan. At 18, the Siberian-born Sharapova has already made the cover of *Forbes* magazine—not for her gorgeous looks, but for her bank account. This year, she stands to earn at least $20 million. And this kid can play. A six-footer, she has all the weapons to be the best in the world, a crushing serve, great groundstrokes and the killer instincts of a puma.



Venus WILLIAMS (8)

Date of Birth	June 17, 1980
Birthplace	Lynwood, California, United States
Height	6'1" (1.85 m)
Weight	160 lbs. (72.5 kg)
Plays	Right-handed
Grand Slam Singles Titles: 4	

You could call Venus Williams the Comeback Kid. The former World No. 1 has been struggling with injuries the past two years, and many had written her off. Then came Wimbledon. Wow! Seeded a lowly No. 14, the 25-year-old returned to the centre stage of women's tennis with stunning wins over reigning Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova and World No. 1 Lindsay Davenport. With her third Wimbledon title, Williams' turnaround is complete. Although her forehand can still be a little shaky at times, she seems to have gained a new mental toughness. She credits some of that to her sister Serena. "I get my strength from Serena. I've tried to fight like her as long as I've been playing tennis." Wouldn't it be great to see them go head to head again?



Justine HENIN-HARDENNE (7)

Date of Birth	June 1, 1982
Birthplace	Liege, Belgium
Height	5'5¾" (1.67 m)
Weight	126 lbs. (57 kg)
Plays	Right-handed
Grand Slam Singles Titles: 4	

Belgium's Justine Henin-Hardenne is one of the smallest women on the tour, at just under 5-foot-6, but what she lacks in size she makes up in raw talent. The spunky Henin-Hardenne, a former World No. 1 and 2003 Rogers Cup champion, overcame adversity to record a straight-sets gold medal victory over French rival Amelie Mauresmo in the women's tennis singles at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece. Justine has been on fire this year since coming back from bouts of injury and illness. In June, she dominated the field to take the French Open title, her fourth tournament win in 2005. Though she made an early exit at Wimbledon this year, she's busy preparing for her summer date in Toronto at the Rogers Cup. No one doubts this fierce competitor's chances to reclaim the prize.



For further information on the Rogers Cup and more player profiles, visit **www.rogerscup.com**

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Get your tickets to the Rogers Cup, presented by American Express, to see tennis greats like 2005 Wimbledon Champion Venus Williams. American Express Cardmembers can get access to platinum and reserved bronze seating for individual sessions. Offer expires August 6th.

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Serena WILLIAMS (6)

Date of Birth:	September 26, 1981
Birthplace:	Saginaw, Michigan, United States
Height:	5'9" (1.75 m)
Weight:	135 lbs (61 kg)
Plays:	Right-handed
Grand Slam Singles Titles:	7

She may be Venus's little sister, but Serena Williams is a tennis superpower in her own right. Although she was injured at Wimbledon, she'll look to repeat her winning ways in Toronto this summer. She last captured the Canadian event in 2001, and this year is aiming to add the Rogers Cup to her Australian Open title. She'll be tough to beat if she's on her game.



Kim CLIJSTERS (14)

Date of Birth:	June 8, 1983
Birthplace:	Bilzen, Belgium
Height:	5'8½" (1.74 m)
Weight:	150 lbs (68 kg)
Plays:	Right-handed
Grand Slam Singles Finals:	4

Another former World No. 1, Belgium's plucky Kim Clijsters is picking up steam again after suffering injuries that sidelined her last season. This year, she's roared back to capture three titles, at Indian Wells, Miami and Eastbourne. Always tough on any surface, Clijsters has reached the finals in four Grand Slams, but victory has eluded her. She hopes to dominate the competition at the Rogers Cup.

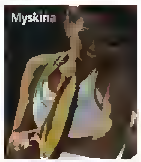


Svetlana KUZNETZOVA (4)

Date of Birth:	June 27, 1985
Birthplace:	St. Petersburg, Russia
Height:	5'8½" (1.74 m)
Weight:	161 lbs (73 kg)
Plays:	Right-handed
Grand Slam Singles Titles:	1

Svetlana Kuznetsova is a charter member of the Russian Invasion that has cracked the top 10 rankings on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour. Her breakthrough season came in 2002, when she jumped 216 spots after winning her first tour singles and doubles titles. In 2004, she surprised the field when she came from the No. 9 seed position to take the U.S. Open. Is the Rogers Cup next on this fearsome Russian's hit list?

Others to watch



Keep an eye out for Sharapova and Kuznetsova's Russian compatriots, Anastasia Myskina (the 2004 French Open champion), Elena Bovina and Vera Zvonareva, who are sure to make waves at the Rogers Cup, presented by American Express. They're part of what has been coined the "Russian Invasion" of women's tennis, an explosion of talent that's turning the game on its head.

Twenty years ago, there were no Soviet women in the world top 100. Last month, there were eight Russians ranked in the world top 20, compared with only three Americans.

And look for our contingent of up-and-coming Canadian players. Although none are ranked high enough in the Sony Ericsson WTA standings to gain automatic entry into the main draw, as many as eight Canadian women could be vying to play their way in through the qualifying tournament. One could even receive a wild card into the main event.



The Canadian contingent

Among the pack of hopefuls are members of Canada's 2005 Fed Cup team: veteran Marie-Eve Pelletier of Repentigny, Stéphanie Dubois of Laval, Aleksandra Wozniak of Blainville and Sharon Fichman of Toronto.

The 22-year-old Pelletier has been on the Fed Cup team for three years. She started the 2005 season with a bang, winning a $50,000 ITF event in Hawaii.

Dubois, 18, has won two ITF titles and reached No. 163 in the world—a career high.

Wozniak, 17, joined the Canadian Fed Cup team last year. This year, as one of the world's top juniors, she won a G1 event in Costa Rica and made the semis of the junior Australian Open.

At 14, Fichman is the youngest player ever to represent Canada in Fed Cup play. In 2005, she reached the semis at tournaments in Argentina and Chile, and recently won both singles and doubles at the prestigious Banana Bowl in Brazil.



Clockwise from top left: Canadian hopefuls Marie-Eve Pelletier, Stéphanie Dubois, Aleksandra Wozniak and Sharon Fichman

ROGERS cup presented by American Express

There's nothing like being there

From August 13 to 21, make sure you come out and cheer on some of the world's best women players as they battle for the Rogers Cup title, right here in Toronto



You've watched it on television and read the media reports. Now experience the world's very best women's professional tennis—live and up close—at the 2005 Rogers Cup, presented by American Express at Toronto's Rexall Centre. And American Express can put you at the front of the line.

Preferred Ticket Access

Amex Cardmembers can get great seats from now until August 6. They have the exclusive opportunity to purchase Rogers Cup Platinum and reserved Bronze level seating on an individual session basis.

Ticket Discounts

Amex Cardmembers can also get a 50% discount on Level 300 tickets for the Friday, August 19, evening session when they purchase tickets for the matinee session that day.

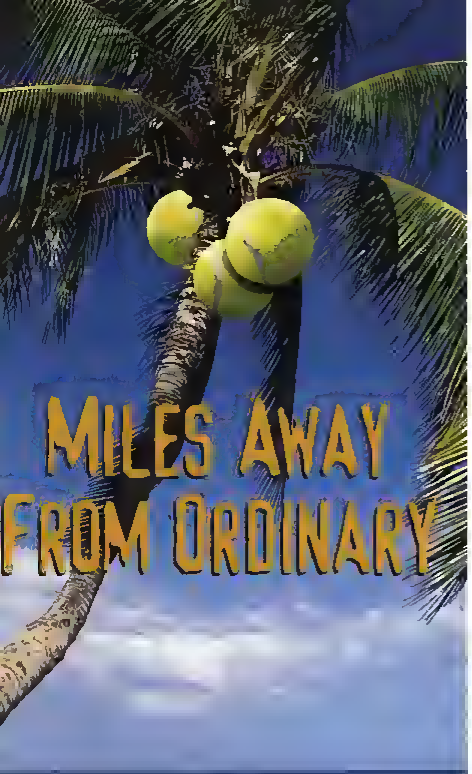
From preferred Cardmember tickets to VIP treatment, contests and giveaways, American Express is giving you the advantage at this year's Rogers Cup

In addition, Cardmembers can get a 10% discount on select 2006 Rogers Cup tickets purchased with an Amex Card at the box office during the 2005 tournament.

Special Treatment for Cardmembers

Cardmembers will have the opportunity to take a break from all the Rogers Cup tournament action and enjoy VIP treatment in the relaxed environment of the American Express Cardmember lounge at the Rexall Centre.

Watch for unique **American Express** experiences in downtown Toronto, open to all tennis lovers throughout this year's tournament.





ROGERS cup 2005

10 Great moments in Canadian tennis

1 Monica Seles chose the 1995 Canadian international championships as her comeback tournament after being stabbed by a disturbed fan at a tournament two years earlier.

2 In 2001, Serena Williams made her first appearance in Toronto and gave fans their money's worth with a thrilling three-set final win over Jennifer Capriati.

3 Few will forget the 1980 final, when then World No. 1 Steffi Graf debuted in Canada, winning a heart-stopping three-setter against Katerina Maleeva to take the title.

4 Anna Kournikova, a 1997 Wimbledon semifinalist at age 16, had fans lining up to see the latest phenom when she first came to the Canadian international championships, in 1998.

5 In 1981, Tracy Austin rebounded from a back injury to win the Canadian championships and went on to take the U.S. Open.

6 Argentina's ever-popular Gabriela Sabatini played 11 times in Canada but won only once, in 1988. Then she defeated Chris Evert in the semis and Natasha Zvereva to win the title.

7 Remember the Swiss Miss? Martina Hingis dominated the world back in 1999, beating Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, Mary Pierce and Monica Seles to win the Canadian Open.

8 In Toronto in 2003, Martina Navratilova, four-time Canadian Open singles champion, capped her outstanding career with a doubles victory at the age of 46.

9 The stellar Jennifer Capriati wowed Toronto tennis fans and the world when she defeated top seed Gabriela Sabatini in the semis and Katerina Maleeva in the finals to win the 1991 Open.

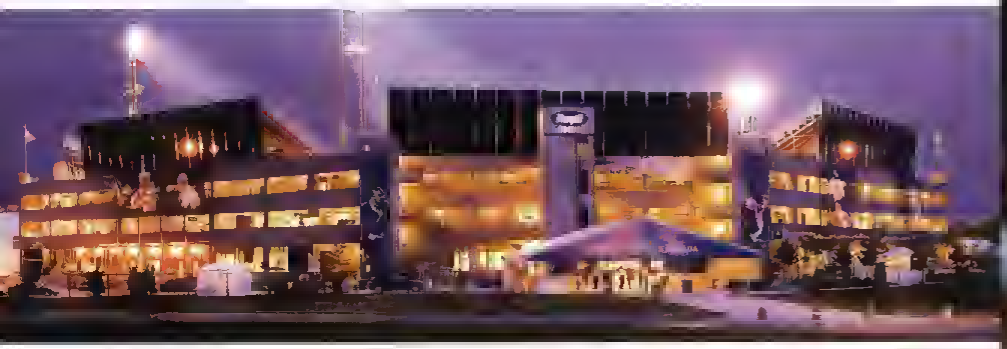
10 Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova lends glamour and power to the Rogers Cup but was beaten in 2003 and again in 2004 by fellow Russians. Maybe this will be her year.

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ROGERS cup 2005

Advantage, Rexall Centre

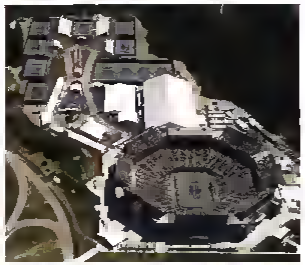
Canada's new National Tennis Centre gets set to play host to the world's best women tennis players and thousands of their devoted fans



Located on the York University campus in Toronto, the new Rexall Centre is the site for this year's Rogers Cup Women's Tennis Tournament, presented by American Express. Construction was completed in July 2004, in time for the 2004 Tennis Masters Canada.

The spectacular outdoor stadium was designed by a 10-member team from Robbie/Young+Wright Architects. Both the site layout and centre court are modelled after the Crandon Tennis Center in Key Biscayne, Florida. Special attention was paid to the location of amenities for spectators, including a detailed study of sightlines to ensure optimum viewing conditions from all seats.

The stadium incorporates 6,000 premium seats, 150 President's Club Suite seats, 41 exclusive Skylounge suites and 5,500 upper-level seats. There are 12 additional tennis courts built adjacent to commercial and retail units, and a 500-seat grandstand court. The centre also provides year-round tennis training and community programming.



The facility is home for Tennis Canada and the Ontario Tennis Association, which offer provincial team training, coaching certification courses and national/provincial high-performance programs.

Rogers Cup 2005 Tournament Schedule

Date	Schedule	Gates Open	Start Time
Sat. Aug. 13	Qualifying	9:30 am	10:00 am
Sun. Aug. 14	Qualifying	9:30 am	10:00 am
Mon. Aug. 15	1st round	10:00 am	11:00 am
Mon. Aug. 15	1st round	5:30 pm	7:00 pm
Tue. Aug. 16	1st/2nd rounds	10:00 am	11:00 am
Tue. Aug. 16	1st/2nd rounds	5:30 pm	7:30 pm
Wed. Aug. 17	2nd round	10:00 am	11:00 am
Wed. Aug. 17	2nd round	5:30 pm	7:30 pm
Thu. Aug. 18	3rd round	10:00 am	11:00 am
Thu. Aug. 18	3rd round	5:30 pm	7:30 pm
Fri. Aug. 19	Quarter-finals	10:00 am	11:00 am
Fri. Aug. 19	Quarter-finals	5:30 pm	7:00 pm
Sat. Aug. 20	Semifinals	10:00 am	1:00 pm
Sat. Aug. 20	Semifinals	5:00 pm	6:30 pm
Sun. Aug. 21	Doubles final	10:30 am	11:00 am
Sun. Aug. 21	Singles final	10:30 am	2:00 pm

Rogers Cup Broadcast Schedule
AUGUST 15–21

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1st round 1 pm–5 pm LIVE 7–9 pm LIVE TSN	1st/2nd rounds 11 am–5 pm LIVE 7:30–10 pm LIVE TSN	2nd round 11 am–5 pm LIVE 7:30–10 pm LIVE TSN	3rd round 11 am–2 pm LIVE 11 pm–1:30 am TAPE TSN	Quarter-finals 11 am–2 pm 7–9:30 pm LIVE 1–2:30 am TAPE TSN	Semifinals 1–3 pm LIVE 6:30–8:30 pm LIVE CBC	Rogers Cup Championship Singles Final 2–4 pm LIVE CBC

Live match broadcasts subject to change

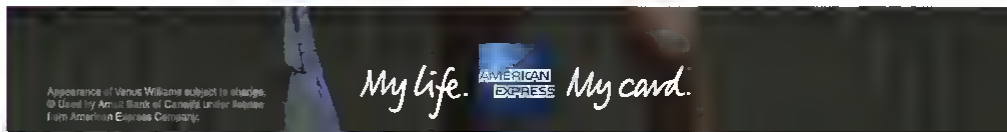


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ROGERS cup

Don't miss your chance to see tennis greats like 2005 Wimbledon Champion Venus Williams at the Rogers Cup, presented by American Express. Only American Express Cardmembers can get access to platinum and reserved bronze seating for individual sessions. Action begins August 13th and runs through to August 21st at the Rexall Centre, York University.

OFFER EXPIRES AUGUST 6TH, SO GET YOUR EXCLUSIVE TICKETS BEFORE THEY'RE GONE
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Appearance of Venus Williams subject to change.
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ROGERS cup 2005

Love, party

Given their demanding training and tournament schedules, the top women players don't have much time for nightlife. But where there's a will...



Clockwise from top left Tennis legend Monica Seles co-hosts Aces Are Wild, a fundraising event for Tennis Canada. Serena and Venus Williams attend the White House correspondents' dinner in April 2005. Maria Sharapova entertains the audience with her ping pong skills on MTV's *Total Request Live*. Amelie Mauresmo jokes with fans, wrapping the head of one in toilet paper. Venus conducts a children's tennis clinic in Moscow.

Scene and heard

The stars of the Rogers Cup, presented by American Express, will come out Sunday night, August 14, to mix it up at the Aces Are Wild player party. It's a fab fundraising event for Tennis Canada. This year, look for **Monica Seles**, the popular and funny five-time Canadian champion, to co-host. And how do the players spend their time when they're not on court? Well, three-time Wimbledon champ **Venus Williams** sure gets around. She and her sister **Serena** have appeared on all the top TV shows. They've done **Oprah** and **David Letterman** and even voiceovers for **The Simpsons**. With her Web site, **Venus** has become quite the blogger, opining on everything from what to do in Moscow to why she hates fashion trends. Sources say most players' three preferred activities during downtime are shopping, listening to music and watching movies. **Amélie Mauresmo**'s favourite flick? *Gladiator*. Does she have a thing for **Russell Crowe**?

How well do you know your tennis?

Take this quiz and find out

1. After her 1993 stabbing, what was Monica Seles's comeback tournament?
2. Name the gold medallist in women's singles tennis at the 2004 Athens Olympics.
3. Name Canada's winning doubles team at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.
4. How many Wimbledon titles has Billie Jean King won?
5. How many Wimbledon singles titles has Venus Williams won?
6. Who was the first woman to earn a million dollars in one season?
7. How many Wimbledon singles titles has Martina Navratilova won?
8. What is the number of consecutive wins on grass by Roger Federer?
9. What year did the Rexall Centre in Toronto open?
10. What was Canadian "Hurricane" Helen Kelesi's best pro ranking?

ANSWERS

1. The 1995 Canadian Open (now the Rogers Cup), Toronto. 2. Justine Henin-Hardenne. 3. Daniel Nestor and Sebastien Lareau. 4. 20. 5. Three. 6. Martina Navratilova. 7. 20. 8. 36. 9. 2004. 10. No. 13, in November 1989.

ROGERS cup 2005

Match points

WTA Singles Rankings (as of July 11, 2005)

Rank	Player	YTD Singles Winnings	Rank Pts.	Tourn.
1	DAVENPORT, Lindsay (USA)	(U S $) 1,596,805	5613 00	17
2	SHARAPOVA, Maria (RUS)	1,256,646	4452.00	20
3	MAURESMO, Amélie (FRA)	895,711	4208 00	19
4	KUZNETSOVA, Svletana (RUS)	534,820	3248 00	20
5	DEMENTIEVA, Elena (RUS)	470,620	3211 00	21
6	WILLIAMS, Serena (USA)	992,304	3145 00	13
7	HENIN-HARDENNE, Justine (BEL)	1,537,301	3069 00	8
8	WILLIAMS, Venus (USA)	1,317,514	2806 00	16
9	PETROVA, Nadia (RUS)	657,330	2672 00	27
10	MYSKINA, Anastasia (RUS)	318,172	2571.00	22
11	MOLIK, Alicia (AUS)	314,101	2330 00	16
12	SCHNYDER, Patty (SUI)	518,154	2167 00	23
13	PIERCE, Mary (FRA)	726,724	2116 00	19
14	CLIJSTERS, Kim (BEL)	1,010,323	2074 00	9
15	ZVONAREVA, Vera (RUS)	213,923	1906 00	25
16	LIKHOVTSEVA, Elena (RUS)	440,901	1807 00	23
17	BOVINA, Elena (RUS)	169,363	1695 00	17
18	DECHY, Nathalie (FRA)	436,572	1666 00	26
19	JANKOVIC, Jelena (SCG)	276,623	1417 25	29
20	IVANOVIC, Ana (SCG)	324,423	1390 75	16

Understanding how the rankings work

OK, so you definitely need a computer and maybe even an advanced degree in mathematics to figure out how the WTA Tour folks arrive at the women's tennis rankings. The standings are published weekly on the WTA Tour Web site—and they matter, determining such crucial factors as player acceptances and seeding for all tournaments.

Here's how the numbers are calculated: The WTA system combines a player's performance in tournament play (round points) with her record against other players (quality points) to arrive at ranking points.

The number of tournament results that comprise a player's ranking is capped at 17 for singles and 11 for doubles. Players are ranked based on the tournaments that yielded their highest ranking points, accumulated over the previous 52 weeks.

For more information on the WTA and its rankings, visit wtatour.com.

TENNIS CANADA

Building for the future

Founded in 1890, Tennis Canada is the non-profit association responsible for national tennis development. It owns and operates two of the premier events on the ATP and WTA Tours, the Rogers Cup men's and women's tournaments, which alternate annually between Toronto's Rexall Centre and Uniprix Stadium in Montreal.

Tennis Canada's goal is to make us a leading tennis power by 2020. By providing our players with a first-class development system, excellent coaching and an athlete-centred training environment, it hopes to produce Grand Slam, Olympic and Paralympic champions, and field World Group Davis, Fed and World Team Cup teams ranking among the world's top 10.

Tennis Canada Women's Open Singles Player Rankings (as of July 12, 2005)

Rank	Player	WTA Rank	WTA/ NCAA	Canada Best 5	Total Pts.
1	PELLETIER, Marie-Eve (QC)	110	34650	206	34856
2	DUBOIS, Stéphanie (QC)	167	22600	118	22718
3	DRAKE, Maureen (ON)	222	17775	148	17923
4	WOZNIAK, Alexandra (QC)	309	9075	96	9171
5	GLORIA, Melanie (QC)	345	6811	136	6811
6	MAROIS, Melanie (QC)	431	4725	182	4907
7	BIRO, Erica (ON)	429	4650	22	4672
8	SOUKUP, Aneta (ON)	718	1550	8	1558
9	RICE, Tania (ON)	N/A	1275	116	1391
10	KRISHNAMURTHY, Kavitha (ON)	896	950	74	1024



ROGERS cup

It's going to be a battle.

Rogers is proud to support Canada's International Women's Tennis Championships. See the world's best, including Venus Williams, Maria Sharapova, and Amelie Mauresmo compete for over 1 6 million dollars at the Rogers Cup, August 13-21, Rexall Centre, Toronto
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YOGI'S NEW PICNIC

Attracted by our plentiful and accessible garbage, bears are coming to town

WHEN STEVEN Hill wrote a front-page story for Whistler, B C 's weekly newspaper, the *Question*, spelling out what to do if there's a bear in the house, he wasn't expecting to put his knowledge to the test But on the very day the story appeared in 2001, he was wakened to the sound of clattering dishes Peeking into his kitchen, Hill saw a bear sitting on his counter with its nose in a cookie jar. "I did what the conservation experts told me to do," he says. "I held my hands up and acted big" But the bear held its ground and Hill wisely backed off, escaping through his bedroom window Then, when he came face to face with the departing animal, he did exactly what he knew he wasn't supposed to—he ran. "I was probably screaming like a girl too," he laughs

Luckily for Hill, his potential opponent fled as well But with growing numbers of bears wandering into our residential areas, people have good reason to learn how to deal with a 250 lb beast on their doorstep A month after the June death of Canmore, Alta , jogger Isabelle Dube in the grip of a grizzly, Alberta's closure of wilderness trails in three provincial parks—including the one where the attack occurred—has stirred up debate over how we share the land with its natural inhabitants With bear populations around many urban centres growing, more of the large animals are being seduced by the garbage we leave within their reach In some cases, this easy food source is drawing them out of hibernation as early as January—meaning more brushes with humans

It's not as if the beasts are becoming more aggressive, says Idaho ecologist Jon Beckmann, who has studied urban bears extensively But they quickly get so used to us they don't move away even when we honk or yell And if they view a garbage can as their pantry, they may object when a homeowner challenges their access. So even though the number of people killed by bears is fairly low—just 45 in all of North America in the past century—many authorities are taking no chances Bears that get too comfortable in built-up areas tend to get shot.



Some hunting groups are not convinced that keeping bears alive is the way to go

Many experts insist that education—for people and bears—is the answer In Whistler, the Get Bear Smart Society teaches residents to eliminate attractions such as garbage—and trains the creatures to behave In the 1990s, authorities in that resort community were killing 20 bears a year Since 2000, the number has ranged from two to six Credit a technique called bear aversion, which the group is promoting across North America It trains the RCMP and conservation officers to dominate the animals by staring them in the eye and talking to them sternly, the idea being to discourage them from hanging around human turf. "It's like making sure a dog is well-trained," Bear Smart executive director Sylvia Dolson explains

'BEAR aversion' trains officers to dominate the animals by staring them straight in the eye and talking to them sternly

Another solution—the idea behind Alberta's trail closures—is to leave the bears green space of their own as our towns encroach on their turf But debate continues over whether animals have any incentive to stick to picking berries when nearby garbage is a plentiful food source Former trail users complain that the bears' rights are now compromising people's ability to enjoy nature

Some hunting groups, meanwhile, are not convinced that keeping bears alive is the way to go The Canadian Outdoor Heritage Alliance, for one, wants Ontario to bring back the spring bear hunt it stopped in 1999 But that's not happening, says the province's natural resources minister, David Ramsay, who cites a provincial study finding no link between the end of the hunt and the number of bears in urban areas

As for Hill, he has since moved to Squamish, B C , where he sees plenty of bears He and his neighbours, he says, realize they have to adapt their lifestyles if they want to keep their green stretch of paradise slightly wild And that, he says, means careful cohabitation.

DAWN LEFEBVRE

LINGERIE AND CARIBOU

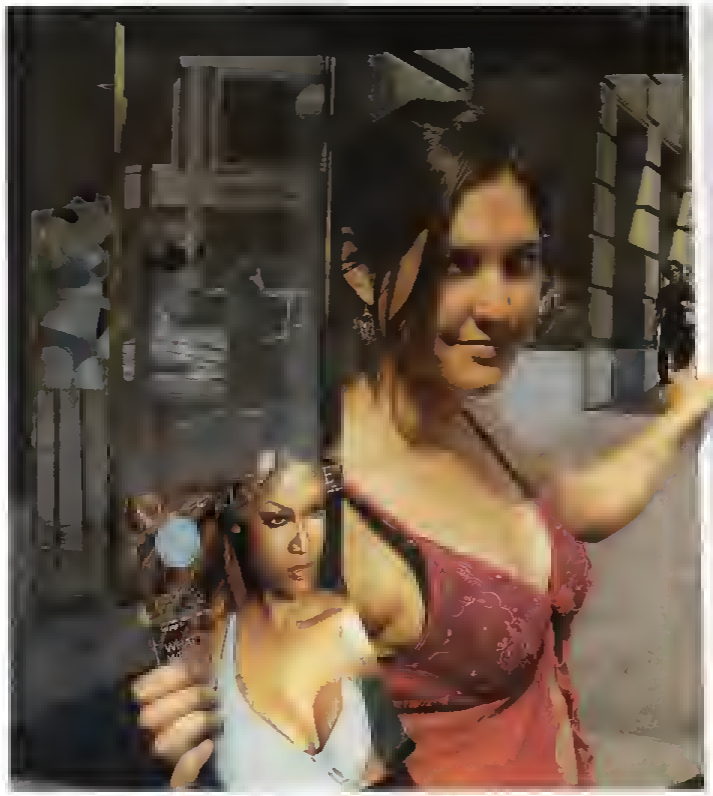
How Victoria's Secret is destroying the habitat of a threatened species to make its catalogues

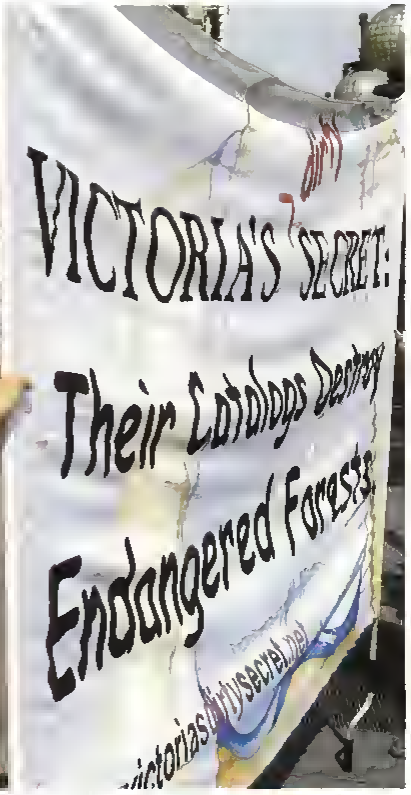
AT FIRST GLANCE, the thrusting female bosom would seem to have nothing in common with a grazing woodland caribou. And yet, the two have become intimately linked. Victoria's Secret, the U.S. purveyor of much bodacious lingerie, is struggling to assuage critics who accuse it of contributing to the demise in Canada of the threatened woodland caribou. The connection? Victoria's Secret prints and mails, on average, well over one million catalogues *a day* to promote its form-enhancing women's undergarments, sleepwear and clothing. But according to ForestEthics, a San Francisco-based environmental watchdog, about 25 per cent of the paper in those catalogues comes from trees felled in Canada's virgin boreal forest, where the caribou live. Habitat loss and fragmentation, says James Schaefer, associate professor of biology at Trent University in Peterborough, Ont., is a major reason why the mammal portrayed on our 25-cent coin is at risk. "Virtually all the populations in the boreal forest are declining," says Schaefer. "They're in trouble—that's very clear."

Last fall, ForestEthics launched a cheeky ad campaign dubbed "Victoria's Dirty Secret." Featuring an arresting photo of a woman in a black merry widow wielding a chainsaw, it calls on the public to pressure the company to stop using paper from endangered forests, to use more recycled paper, and to stop publishing so many catalogues. The campaign has caught on, with traffic flocking to the www.*victoriasdirtysecret.net* website, says Kristi Chester Vance, a ForestEthics spokeswoman. In April, the group staged more than 100 demonstrations at Victoria's Secret outlets across the United States in a day of protest. In June, 150 demonstrators descended on the Global Forest and Paper Summit in Vancouver to vent their frustration with industry leaders from 26 countries who had gathered for a conference. And on Canada Day, environmentalists held awareness-raising events in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa and Forestville, Calif.

Anthony Hebron, spokesman for Limited Brands, the Columbus, Ohio-based parent company of Victoria's Secret, says its catalogue practices are changing. Even before the protests started, he says, the company had started cleaning up its environmental act. This year, says Hebron, it will print more than 25 million catalogues promoting clearance sales on paper with 85 per-cent recycled content. ForestEthics counters that Victoria's Secret has made the move only after the environmental group quietly alerted it in 2003 that it was preparing its caribou campaign. Besides, nearly 90 per cent of its catalogues still contain little or no recycled paper. But the company has made "an excellent first step," Chester Vance concedes. "If Victoria's Secret would do what it's done with its clearance catalogues for the rest of its catalogues, that would be a huge leap forward for the industry."

STUDIES show that the animal gracing our 25-cent coin has already vanished from half of its historic range





A demonstrator at the company's flagship outlet in San Francisco

COURTESY FORESTETHICS

Hebron said last October that the retailer was studying ways to further increase its use of recycled paper. Over nine months later, however, the company is still "looking at availability and other factors" to determine whether there's enough forest-friendly paper in the marketplace to meet its heavy demand. Asked how long the market assessment will take, Hebron replied, "There's no timetable for that."

Woodland caribou—one of three types native to Canada—are found in all provinces and territories except Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nunavut. The latest data suggest there may be 33,000 still living among the black spruce, white spruce and tamarack of the northern boreal forest. In 2000, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, a federal agency, designated the boreal woodland caribou a "threatened" species, citing habitat loss as one reason. Schaefer, who has studied the animals for 20 years, says they've vanished from half of their historic range, which once included all of the Maritime provinces, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Rachel Plotkin, director of the forests and biodiversity program for the Sierra Club of Canada, notes that B.C. and Alberta have no legislation to protect the caribou, while Manitoba has applicable laws but hasn't used them to shield the animals. At least Quebec, adds Plotkin, has engaged the public in the future of forest management. She notes the province recently announced plans to reduce the volume of tree harvesting from public forests by 20 per cent. But the woodland caribou population is already stressed from diminishing access to its preferred habitat, and it's not getting much help. "I think most people know that Canada has federal endangered species protection," says Plotkin, but they may not realize how restricted those powers are. "It affords no protection to species that are on provincial land outside federal jurisdiction," she says, "which basically means not in a federally protected area, a post office or military base, or swimming in the ocean."

It's easy to see why environmentalists would want to drag Victoria's Secret into the debate—Hebron realizes people regard his company as "a media-friendly target." Take beautiful, half-clad women, combine them with a motherhood issue like threatened animals, and you're bound to get attention. This strategic offensive is also a sign of the times. Environmentalists are no longer so fond of chaining themselves together on remote logging roads. Instead, they're going for the corporate jugular, taking on globally recognized brands with a lot to lose.

Look at the recent history. ForestEthics began a campaign in 2000 against Staples, the office supply store. Eventually, Staples started duking it out with its competitors, Office Depot and OfficeMax, over which was more environmentally responsible, says Chester Vance. That retail sector had typically relied on recycled paper for less than five per cent of its needs. Now, she says, those three companies are committed to moving that figure up to 30 per cent. Other major firms have recently taken a more progressive approach to their catalogue operations, among them Williams-Sonoma, the high-end kitchen store, and computer manufacturer Dell.

But the battle continues. In Canada, says Plotkin, the plight of the woodland caribou shows how current practices still have to change. To illustrate what it sees as provincial and territorial government failure to implement effective measures, the Sierra Club has established a public database, *www.sierraforestwatch.ca*, assessing the state of the forests in each jurisdiction. While the focus should be on what kind of habitat can be maintained for the animals, she says, "the main objective of governments that are creating policy is still, 'How much can we get out of this forest?'" It's time to look at the evidence and change attitudes, she says, "because caribou are telling us that our past practices have been unsustainable." M

DON'T HURRY, BE HAPPY

BRIAN BETHUNE tells how the once-speed-addicted Carl Honoré became the guru of the slow movement



STRIDING ACROSS BUSY thoroughfares in a city where absolutely no one obeys traffic lights, or gliding over the ice in a dilapidated arena, Carl Honoré doesn't seem any slower than his fellow Londoners. The transplanted Canadian's home is as chaotic as any young family's, and he has trouble finding his car keys for the drive to his weekly, late-night hockey scrimmage. But a closer look turns up anomalies in the life of a busy freelance journalist. There's no watch on Honoré's wrist. He no longer works weekends or eats at his desk. And, even as play starts in an eagerly anticipated soccer match on TV, he remains in an upstairs bedroom, reading to his six-year-old son, Benjamin.

A nice touch, that, since it was a now-mythic encounter with a kids' publishing phenomenon called *One-Minute Bedtime Stories* that prompted Carl Honoré's road-to-Damascus conversion into the Apostle of Slow. "I just dreaded the slow bedtime routine," Honoré recalls. "Just couldn't wait to get on to the next thing I had to do—supper, emails, whatever. When I was in that line up at the Rome airport five years ago and read that article about boiling classic fairy tales down to 60-second sound bites, I thought, eureka!" Then, a last, saving burst of rationality struck his time-obsessed mind. "Have I gone completely insane?"

Honoré flew home in a thoughtful mood, weighing the benefits of speed (Internet, jet travel, the wealth generated by turbo-charged capitalism) and its costs (stress, family communication via fridge notes, the environmental damage wreaked by turbo-charged capitalism). By the time he landed, Honoré had a new mission: to find out if anyone was doing more than complaining about the frenzied pace of modernity. And, if possible along the way, find a cure for his own addiction to speed. The result is his book *In Praise of Slow* (Vintage Canada) which, since appearing last year, has spread its message across the world like a computer virus, becoming the *de facto* link among the various slowness-advocacy groups he was among the first to publicize.

There were rebellions against the fast track going on everywhere, Honoré discovered. Researching them and, once *In Praise of Slow* was published, talking them up at workshops and lectures, has occupied much of Honoré's time ever since (*Slow* is now in 20 languages). In mid-July, he was a featured speaker at the prestigious TED Global (Technology, Entertainment, Design) conference in Oxford, sharing the podium with the likes of Cambridge University biomedical pioneer Aubrey de Grey. Honoré hasn't missed the irony of slowness having sped up his life. "People do ask me if I'm a bit of a hypocrite. I answer, 'No, I'm a martyr to the cause.' Yes, I am busier now than before I wrote *Slow*, but it doesn't feel like it."

Honoré, 37, and his wife, Miranda France, 38, a travel writer and literary critic, still live in London with Benjamin and three-year-old Susannah, so life on the surface has changed little. "But there's a clear before and after. I control my travel now. On weekends we used to have things skedded; now there's always one day open for spontaneity. For years I felt out of control, getting through life rather than living it. I think lots of people feel that way."

Honoré has collected an abundance of anecdotal and official information to detail how "time sickness" has become a major malady of our time. He ticks off, in no particular order, the growing tendency of employees (including a quarter of Canadian workers) to not take their full vacation entitlement, acquaintances who no longer read poetry because it yields its meaning too slowly, the emergence of job stress as the leading cause of workplace absenteeism in Britain, watching a father kick a soccer ball with his son, all the while talking on his cellphone, the acceleration of pastimes that should be unhurried by nature, with things like instant gardening and speed dating.

Honoré makes sure 'slow' doesn't detract from family life in London

It all adds up to far more than a problem for individuals. In her recent book, *No Time* (Douglas & McIntyre), Ottawa writer and scholar Heather Menzies points with alarm to what she calls the Attention Deficit Society. Stressed individuals mean stressed institutions, Menzies warns, and a consequent inability to come to terms with real societal problems. For his part, Honoré consulted various thinkers not only on why our socio-economic situation pushes an ever-faster pace at us, but also on why we *love* speed. There's the ecstasy of it, of course, the way moving very quickly triggers the brain's release of two chemicals—epinephrine and norepinephrine—that sex also prompts. And then there's the transcendence speed provides. Honoré writes how Canadian philosopher Mark Kingwell told him that speed is a first-class distraction from the knowledge of our own mortality. Only

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

then did the journalist start to look for balanced responses. What he wanted was a prescription for a life lived at what musicians call the *tempo giusto*, the right speed.

Slow food, one of the first reactions against high-speed life, attracted Honoré's attention from the beginning. As a teenager in Edmonton, the son of a doctor from Mauritius and his Scots-born wife, Honoré had always found the family's evening meal "the big human moment of the day." It's one he and Miranda had let slide in London. "Before having kids we sometimes ate take-away in front of the TV. We never do that now. We always cook—just doing that melts stress—and I find I taste my food more and get more pleasure from my family."

IN FACT, a slow food movement, dedicated to preserving traditional foods and building on the back-to-the land ethos of the sixties, began to emerge in Italy almost two decades ago. Food writer Carlo Petrini was enraged by the arrival of a McDonald's right beside Rome's famed Spanish Steps in 1986. He issued a manifesto against "the universal folly of Fast Life—our defence should begin at the table with Slow Food." Slow food now claims 83,000 members in 50 nations. The Italian branch boasts of having saved 130 "dying delicacies," from Ligurian potatoes to a breed of Sienese wild boar. In 1999, the movement gathered half a million signatures in a successful campaign to convince the Italian government to exempt traditional cheesemakers from modern industrial hygiene standards. Its biannual food fest, *Salone del Gusto*, attracts 500 artisanal producers of everything from hams to fruits—and more than 125,000 visitors.

That Italians should revolt in favour of a gastronomic *dolce vita* is hardly surprising, but even in North America the movement has made strides. U.S. farmers are leading a successful campaign to maintain the turkey breeds that ruled local Thanksgiving markets before the rise of factory farms. In Toronto, chef Jeff Crump, founder of Slow Food Ontario, leads groups of children in a dual-track cooking class: they make Kraft Dinner and then a slow version of macaroni and cheese. The taste test is a foregone conclusion, Crump hopes the kids will take the lesson to heart. Slow food, the movement argues, is not just for well-heeled epicures—local produce is often less pricey than imports, and meals made from scratch are usually cheaper than prepared versions.

Slow food has been joined by slow cities (movements to keep residences, workplaces and shops within reasonable proximity), slow medicine (a reaction against technological and drug-centred healing that is open to traditional medical philosophies), and slow leisure (everything from knitting to literally doing nothing).

Honoré has even attended a Speed Awareness Program for British drivers, a go slow concept that he viewed with as much interest as he did slow food. But from the opposite perspective. Once an inveterate speeder (he sheepishly admits to getting a ticket in Italy while on the way to his first slow food meal), Honoré is reluctant to say he's now fully cured. "It's like alcoholism, it's never really gone from you." But the awareness Honoré knew well from a recording by Daniel Barenboim. It seemed odd at first, but soon began to sound richer, more textured and melodious. Klemt's version ran a shade over 22 minutes; Barenboim's is finished in 14. But *tempo giusto* can expect little help from a classical establishment with backlists to sell, nor from a public that has come to expect virtuoso, mainly uptempo, performances.

It's not just the classics that have accelerated. In pop music, Honoré points out, the program, designed as an alternative to paying a fine for ticketed drivers, was a huge eye-opener for him, demonstrating that speeding on short trips does almost nothing for a driver but add to his stress levels—a three-kilometre drive at 130 km/h saves only 52 seconds over the same trip at 80 km/h. Honoré thinks he will always have to work at it, but at least, he says, "my speedaholism is tamed. I can't remember the last time my wife had to tell me to slow down."

The journalist is less sure that the *tempo giusto* musical movement, one of the more intriguing anti-speed rebellions he encountered, has a future. *Tempo giusto* claims that—in accord with our lust for speed—we have over the past two centuries gradually increased the tempo at which we play classical music, at an unknown cost to composers' original intentions. In 1876, Franz Liszt commented in a letter that it took him "almost an hour" to play Beethoven's *Hammerklavier Sonata, op. 106*, today, pianists rattle through it in 35 to 40 minutes. Honoré listened to Uwe Klemt, a German *tempo giusto* adherent, play Mozart's *Sonata in C Major, KV 279*, a work

'FOR YEARS I FELT OUT OF CONTROL, GETTING THROUGH LIFE RATHER THAN LIVING IT'



'We always cook—just doing that melts stress,' says Honoré. 'and I find I taste my food more and get more pleasure from my family.'

20th century "was all about boosting the beat," from ragtime through rock 'n' roll to techno. In 1976, a book titled *How to Make a Hit Record* advised wannabe pop stars that 120 beats a minute was optimum for a dance track; by the 1990s, drum and bass music was humming along at 170 beats per minute. Moby's 1992 single *Thousand* clocked in at a head-splitting 1,000 beats a minute.

Nothing has brought Honoré more attention, however, or more blushing questions, than slow sex. For all their sex saturated culture, modern Westerners spend very little time at it. Decent sex, like decent food, seems to be among time sickness's earliest victims: a large-scale 1994 study found Americans devoted a sad 30 minutes a week to making love. Too much work and busy schedules clearly act as cold showers. The "official" slow sex movement is as Italian as slow food (indeed, a perfect example of how one slow movement cross fertilizes another). Alberto Vitale, a marketing consultant from the same Italian town, Bra, where slow food was launched, established slow sex in 2002. He now runs a website (*www.slowsex.it*) and gives talks in local social clubs about the joys of "erotic deceleration"—essentially extended foreplay.

Every day, Honoré reports, 12,000 people navigate through the Internet's cascade of porn sites to reach *www.tantra.com*, home site for the burgeoning discipline that promises to channel sexual energy not only into finer, better sex, but also into a more perfect spiritual union with your partner. Despite the awful warning example of pop star Sting—who has yet to live down his public ravings a decade ago about his tantric sex life—Honoré was gamely determined to investigate and write about it. He and Miranda attended a workshop held in an old warehouse in North London, along with a cross-section of reassuringly normal Londoners.

Honoré was pleasantly impressed with all of it: the long period spent blindfolded, exploring his wife's hands, the sensory session with tastes and sounds, even the exercises designed to strengthen the pubococcygeus, the muscle running from the pubic bone to the tailbone that in tantric sex is the key to more intense orgasms. All that was easy enough to write about. Talking about his tantric experience, in terms of personal payoff, is naturally a lot harder. "People do ask, in a giggly way, but they do ask." The normally voluble Honoré pauses a moment while he ponders just how much of his—and more importantly, Miranda's—private life he's prepared to martyr to the cause. "We're not tantric, but we do have a slower beat now. Maybe that's true for everyone who slows down in everything else—sex takes care of itself."

FOR SLOWNESS advocates of all stripes, the enemy or, as Honoré politely phrases it, "the principal opponent," is "the corporate world and its ideas of how work must be." We can try to drive slower, to avoid eating on the run or sending emails at midnight—we can even aim for making love seven hours at a stretch à la Sting—but if our economic structures do not permit that approach to life, how will it happen? Especially, Honoré notes, if we internalize the demands of the workplace, and accept that it has priority over other aspects of our lives.

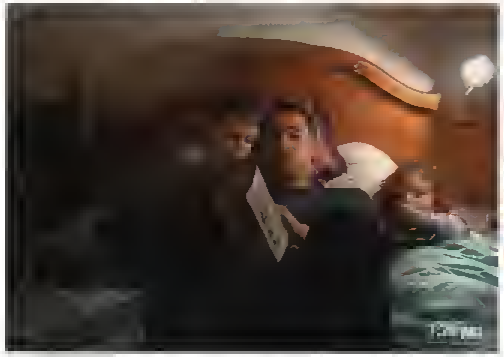
We seem to have done just that. Forty years ago, government bodies worried about how we'd cope with the abundant leisure time experts saw on the horizon. A U.S.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

Senate subcommittee even predicted a 14-hour work week by 2000, in 2005, a 14-hour *workday* is more likely. One in four Canadians now racks up more than 50 hours a week. And that doesn't count commuting hours. Devices from laptops to cellphones that were supposed to free us by expanding our horizons, actually enchain us. If your office can phone you in the middle of a wilderness canoe trip, sooner or later it will.

Honoré also suggests that misery loves company. "American journalists in Europe focus on work life to the exclusion of anything else, reacting with glee to any problems with the French 35-hour week, for example. They can't seem to bear the idea that Europeans work less but still have a high standard of living—and a higher quality of life."

Honoré, ever the optimist, sees signs of hope in the sort of working arrangements have often asked for an audio version of *In Praise of Slow*—"so they could listen to it in the car," the amused author explains, "because they didn't have time to read it." Honoré points to the intriguing fact that his book is attracting a lot of attention "in countries on the cusp of going First World: China, Brazil, Croatia, Thailand, places like that." He thinks that's because "people there are worried about what they see here—and





His epiphany came when he read an article about a new bedtime book that distilled classic fairy tales down to '60-second sound bites'

But working hard is not the same as working smart. According to the Geneva-based International Labour Organization, French workers are more productive than Americans, even though the latter work an average of 350 hours more a year. Overwork is associated with stress, absenteeism and even suicide—Honoré cites a recent Canadian poll in which 15 per cent of the respondents said job stress had caused thoughts of suicide. So why do we do it? Part of the reason is we want much of what it brings—the income, the status, the social network, the feeling of self-worth. That alone can seduce many into workaholism, which increases the intensity of those good feelings, argues Menzies in *No Time*. But it's also true, as one workaholic she interviews says, that many people have found it prudent to make themselves as indispensible as they can in an age of downsizing, as a hedge against being laid off.

The modern workplace contains more work to be done than in years past, fewer bodies to do it, and very little trust. "The fear factor is huge," notes Honoré, who

some corporate employees have managed to carve out for themselves. He cites Karen Domaratzki and Susan Lieberman, two Toronto executives at Royal Bank headquarters who've been sharing a job—and promotions—since 1997. They work three days a week, overlapping on Wednesdays. Each has three children, and has found the reduced workload a domestic godsend. The 40-per-cent pay cut is bearable, cushioned by the fact each has a high-earning husband. That's the stumbling block, of course. Most work-life balance solutions so far are only for the well off and the highly sought-after. Real change for the rest of us, says Honoré, will probably require government intervention.

Sometimes Honoré thinks the love of speed is sunk too deeply in our cultural DNA for any large-scale change to occur, at least in the developed world. Here, many who respond to his message do so in a culturally determined, speed-besotted way—they want to slow down *as quickly as possible*. At events promoting his book, audience members

they hope they don't have to take the entire modern package." And Honoré is heartened by readers' responses. "I've been a journalist for 14 years, and no had ever told me before that what I'd written had changed their lives. Kingwell's right—a lot of our hyper-accelerated lives has to do with putting off the big questions. You know you're paying a price but you're in denial."

One guiding principle Honoré has learned is that "nobody has two burnouts." He seems as far away from a first one as an in-demand professional can be. Having read to Benjamin as long as the boy liked, having caught the rest of the soccer match and found his car keys, Honoré—six foot five in his skates—is now teetering against the boards in the Streatham Ice Arena. He's serenely indifferent to the fact that the arena, the self-styled "temple of hockey in south London," is an appalling dump of peeling paint and cracked protective partitions, that the Zamboni has broken down and that his Streatham Chiefs teammates are restlessly looking at the clock. "I do have an idea for another book, and a lot of publishers panting for it," he allows. "But," he shrugs as he finally gets to hit the ice, "I'm just too busy." M

ON THE WEB Read an excerpt from Carl Honoré's *In Praise of Slow*. www.macleans.ca/excerpt

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IN PRAISE OF GRUMPINESS

We try and we try and we try and we try, but we can't get no satisfaction. And that's okay—humans weren't meant to be happy SUE FERGUSON reports.



ALL YOU MISERABLE, despondent wretches out there, take heart. Happiness isn't everything it's chalked up to be. For one thing, that chirpy, outgoing chatterer in the next cubicle suffers too by the latest scientific calculations he's more likely than you to have an unstable family life, drug and/or alcohol addictions and to end up in a hospital emergency ward. Plus, he's less likely than you to harbour that streak of creative genius neurotics often possess. Anyway, *being* happy isn't the point. *Striving* to be happy is where it's at, at least from evolution's demanding perspective. So enough with recording those "three blessings" every day, or composing saccharine thank-you's followed up by "gratitude visits" to people you appreciate. Enough, as well, with other joy boosters such as meditation, laughter clubs and Prozac. Let's hear it for crankiness.

Perhaps this cynicism is a tad over the top. After all, happiness is a booming industry right now, what with self-help publishing, millions of research dollars being funnelled to academics to study "subjective well-being," and huge numbers throwing their lot in with the slow movement, Buddhism and all those other philosophies promising inner peace and contentment. That's not to mention Big Pharma cranking out all manner of mood-altering drugs.

We've even turned happiness into an international competition in which Canada, by the way, fares relatively well, usually placing in the top third in international comparisons—often ahead of our wealthier neighbour to the south. What's more, many industrialized nations—Canada very much among them—are now exploring a concept first introduced in 1972 by the king of Bhutan: the GNH, or Gross National Happiness index. The Atkinson Charitable Foundation in Toronto has given $1.5 million to a high-profile group of academics and government officials to come up with a specific Canadian index of well-being that would measure such intangibles as the work-life balance. The group includes such luminaries as former health care commissioner Roy Romanow, economist Judith Maxwell and happiness guru Alex Michalos of the University of Northern B.C., and it asks: why measure a nation's well-being simply by what it produces or exports when you can also add in the contentment factor?

Despite all this activity—maybe *because* of it—don't you just want to give the sad sacks of the world a great big hug? To thank them for hanging in there, ignoring all the brouhaha, and carrying on with their moaning and groaning. Sure, some scientists suggest that happy people live longer, but it's the grumps among us who are doing their bit to perfect the species—if it weren't for the unhappy, one influential evolutionary theory suggests, *Homo sapiens* could have gone the way of the dodo.

Alas, the makers and shakers of happiness are hard to keep down. Ever since the exuberant Martin Seligman took over the reins of the American Psychological Association in 1998, proclaiming it the Year of the Happy, this most positive, pervasive and elusive of emotions has moved to the front line of academic and clinical consideration.

Everywhere you look these days it seems science is taking happiness's measure. Researchers are examining people's state of mind through surveys, lifespan and other health statistics. High-tech keeners are using brain-imaging techniques like MRIs (magnetic resonance imaging) to peer inside the minds of depressives, meditating monks, even tiny babies to chart what happens when their moms leave the room and

SOURCES: WORLD VALUES SURVEY, MARCH 2005; STATISTICS CANADA; CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

then come back again. The most recent tools are hand-held computerized mood sensors and two-way devices like BlackBerries. John Zelenski is a young psychology prof at Carleton University in Ottawa who just received almost $200,000 from the Canada Foundation for Innovation to set up a "happiness lab" on campus. Until now, Zelenski has mostly gathered his information by having respondents fill out diaries detailing their activities and mood swings. In the future, he is hoping to lend out PDAs (personal digital assistants) to his survey group so he can email them in the midst of an unguarded moment and ask, "Are you happy now?"

The result of all this probing? Such truisms as: money can't buy happiness but doing good deeds lifts the spirit; vying for status and beauty boosts your happiness quotient only temporarily (except, it seems, for women who get breast implants—they're likely to stay pretty happy—according to one study), and maintaining a network of friends plants you firmly on the bright side of life.

Isn't it curious, though, that so much of what science has "discovered" we've heard before? If not from our rabbi, imam or pastor, then from a no-nonsense grandma. But say we stopped asking what we, as individuals, can do to be happy? What if, instead, we asked how does happiness work for us? That's something Gran probably didn't think much about. Rather than finding the path to feeling good, some of the more original research in this felicitous field is now grappling with the role the pursuit of happiness plays in our survival as a species.

The irony is, in stepping back from the therapy model and declining to play Dr. Feel-Good, these researchers may be laying the groundwork for a greater overall sense of well-being. The key to individual happiness, in other words, could be in understanding precisely what we *can't* expect from it.

I can't get no satisfaction
'Cause I try and I try and I try and I try
I can't get no, I can't get no . . .

From an evolutionary point of view, Mick Jagger's thwarted ambitions shouldn't bother us too much. According to psychologist Daniel Nettle from the University of Newcastle, frustration—not satisfaction—is the modus operandi of our Darwinian struggle, making us the fools on the great stage of evolution. Humans are designed, insists Nettle, to strive for things that won't necessarily make us happy, in the poignant belief that they will. "We come to the world believing that there is such a thing as achievable happiness, that it is desirable and important, and that the things that we desire will bring it about," he writes in *Happiness. The Science Behind Your Smile* (Oxford University Press). "It is not self-evident that any of these are actually true."

Nettle unpacks the concept of happiness by identifying what he calls its three levels: visceral sensations of joy; feelings of satisfaction, and judgments about the overall quality of life. The first two, the subjects of his book, are by nature transitory (the latter, he argues, is less a matter of psychology than ethics and politics). Intense pleasure, in fact, is biologically fleeting—and needs to be so we can turn our attention back to the things that matter such as the rent cheque, the crying baby or, in ancient times, when emotions were forged, the imminent attack of a sabre-toothed tiger. Worry is what colonizes the mind.

Even a boost to our general sense of well-being, says Nettle, fades away in relatively short order. He cites a study in which Americans were asked to indicate which major consumer goods—house, car, TVs, travel, swimming pool and so on—they already owned—and then to draw up a list of those they would include in their ideal of the good life. When the survey was repeated 16 years later, respondents went from owning, on average, 17 to 31 of the listed items. But as their wealth expanded, so did their desires. At the end of the study, "they were still," he writes, "two items short of where they wanted to be, just as they had been at the beginning."

Like the song says, we try and we try and we try but, for the most part, we don't get any happier. It's as if we are on a hedonic treadmill, as some researchers have called it. So the bigger house? The second car? That long-awaited vacation abroad? Sure, life will probably get a little easier, more comfortable, more fascinating or exciting. But will you be happier? Not for long, it seems—six months, maybe a year. "You just get used to it," Nettle says in an interview. People "readjust to the baseline and forget what it was like before. Then they start cursing that they don't have that second garage, or whatever."

This process, which experts call adaptation, goes a long way to explaining why, despite the growth in income and possessions, happiness levels, as measured by the U.S. National Opinion Research Center, haven't budged in 50 years (a third of Americans were "very happy" in 1955 and are so now). At the same time, international comparisons suggest that the wealthy West doesn't have a monopoly on good cheer. According to the World Values Survey, devised by an international network of social scientists, Canadians and Americans register 8.5 and 9 respectively on a 10-point scale. But poorer and violence-prone countries such as Colombia and Puerto Rico are neck-and-neck with us. They are even a bit ahead of prosperous nations such as Japan, Italy and Spain. Eastern Europe, meanwhile, dominates the other end of the scale, with Moldova, the Ukraine and Belarus pulling up the grumpy rear.

On the evolutionary front, it may well be the unhappy we have to thank. Survival of the fittest meant that the successful reproducers among our ancestors learned to envy their even more successful neighbours. This is not to say people are inherently greedy or avaricious, Nettle argues. In some societies generosity was valued above all, in others it was cunning or bravery. In our advanced capitalist society, wealth and possessions are the most obvious status symbols. What's more, everything today is magnified. "All cultures have been concerned about increasing personal happiness, but there have been harsh constraints on how much you could really do that," says Nettle. "We're so affluent now and exposed to so many media, that what would be normally a minor drive is worked up into a frenzy."

Yet we should not and cannot, in Nettle's view, give up the search for happiness. Our personalities—whether sunny or sad—may be largely set at birth. Scientists are now discovering personality may even correspond to distinct types of brain activity. To oversimplify, neurotics tend to be unhappy, and show greater blood flow in the right part of the brain (the intuitive, sensory side), extroverts tend to be happy, with more blood flowing through the left hemisphere (the logical, analytical side).

Recent research in Canada and elsewhere emphasizes the importance of volunteering, spending time with friends (especially those of the opposite sex), being physically active and keeping a diary. These things are more likely to bring about a felicitous state than education, youth, beauty or money on their own. Marriage and children, incidentally, are a roller coaster ride, temporarily boosting mood only to deflate it as the stresses of family life accumulate.

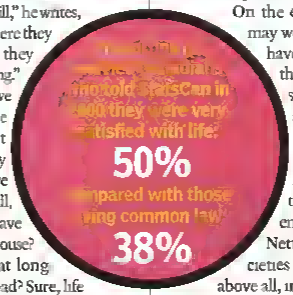
Cognitive behavioural therapy, drugs, spirituality, meditation and "pleasant activities training" (a clinical term for, you guessed it, doing things you enjoy), can all be productive treatments for feeling depressed, Nettle says in his new book. None of these compare, however, to forgetting about our bid to be happy, and connecting with things that are larger than ourselves—nature, art, literature, faith, meditation or hobbies. This is because we're caught in what Nettle calls the "hedonic paradox." In "pursuing happiness itself, one makes it more distant," he argues. "Whereas by pursuing something else, one can inadvertently bring it closer." Didn't Gran have something to say about that as well?

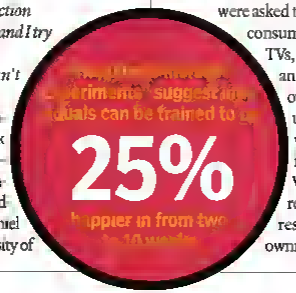
A NATION'S HAPPINESS BY THE NUMBERS

The 25 most contented societies, as judged by the latest World Values Survey. From a list of 82

1. Puerto Rico
2. Mexico
3. Denmark
4. Ireland
5. Iceland
6. Switzerland
7. Northern Ireland
8. Colombia
9. Netherlands
10. Canada
11. Austria
12. El Salvador
13. Venezuela
14. Luxembourg
15. United States
16. Australia
17. New Zealand
18. Sweden
19. Nigeria
20. Norway
21. Belgium
22. Finland
23. Saudi Arabia
24. Singapore
25. Britain

The results were based on an amalgamation of two questions. (1) "Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy, rather happy, not very happy; not at all happy." And (2) "On a scale of one to 10, all things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?"





HAPPINESS MAY HELP PEOPLE LIVE LONGER, BUT CRANKS ARE PERFECTING THE SPECIES

EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK TODAY IT SEEMS THAT SCIENCE IS TAKING HAPPINESS'S MEASURE

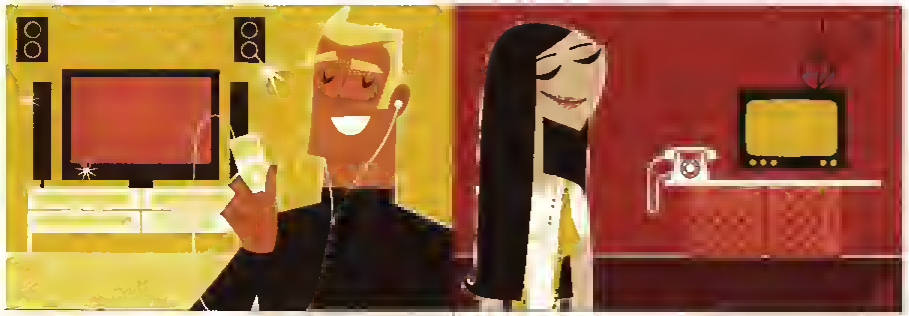


Intense pleasure, Nettle says, is biologically fleeting—so we can get back to what counts

COURTESY OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE PLUGGED-IN PRICE

So you want the latest gadgets. There's a world of high-tech equipment to choose from: surround sound home theatre systems, digital cameras with ever-expanding megapixels, MP3 players that let you take your music everywhere, high definition television with picture quality to die for. But with all those gizmos come the bills. Once you add up the monthly service charges and amortize the cost of comparatively modest televisions and computers, you'll find the annual total for a well-wired home actually rivals the average Canadian household's yearly food expenses ($6,791). Compare that to what mostly gadgetless Luddites pay for their out-of-date gear. The cutting edge costs.



WIRED	FIXED PRICES & MONTHLY FEES	ANNUAL COSTS*
PHONE		
Basic phone service	$22.95/month	$275.40
Electronic voicemail	$7.00/month	$84.00
Cellphone with 200 minutes	$29.99/3-year $34.95/month service fees	$441.06
BlackBerry	$534.99 $59.45/month service fees	$891.73
TELEVISION		
LCD 32-inch HD-TV	$3,299.99	$1,100.00
Surround sound home theatre system	$399.99	$133.33
VCR/DVD player	$129.99	$43.33
CABLE		
Digital cable, including movie channels	$89.95/month	$1,079.40
PVR	$12.99/month	$155.88
COMPUTER		
PC Pentium 4, 512MB RAM, 160GB HD, DVD, 17" LCD monitor	$999.99	$333.33
Computer printer/scanner	$179.99	$60.00
5 colour printer cartridges	$32.99 each	$164.95
High-speed Internet access	$44.95/month	$539.40
CAMERAS		
3.2 megapixel digital camera	$279.99	$93.33
512MB memory card	$29.99	$10.00
4 CDs of 24 images, plus prints	$14.56 each	$58.24
Camcorder	$599.99	$200.00
2 mini DV tape 3-packs	$29.99 each	$50.98
EXTRAS		
20 GB iPod	$379.99	$126.66
PlayStation 2	$179.99	$60.00
5 games for PlayStation	$49.99 each	$249.95
TOTAL ANNUAL COSTS:	**$272.24/month**	**$6,150.97**

LUDDITE	FIXED PRICES & MONTHLY FEES	ANNUAL COSTS*
PHONE		
Basic phone service	$22.95/month	$275.40
Answering machine	$34.99	$3.50
TELEVISION		
20" TV	$249.99	$24.99
CABLE		
Basic cable	$23.99/month	$287.88
VCR/DVD player	$129.99	$13.00
COMPUTER		
Computer access at library	free	$0
Printouts — 50 pages/year	20 cents/page	$10.00
60 stamps	50 cents each	$30.00
CAMERAS		
35 mm camera	$119.99	$12.00
4 rolls of 24-frame film & processing	$16.98 each	$67.92
TOTAL ANNUAL COSTS:	**$46.94/month**	**$724.69**

*All prices include activation fees but are before taxes and are for basic equipment. Luddites' fixed prices amortized over 10 years, Techies' amortized over three years.

Sources: BELL CANADA, FUTURE SHOP, HENRY'S, KORNERCOLOR, ROGERS, BEST BUY GRAND & TOY, STATISTICS CANADA, TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY, CANADA POST

ILLUSTRATION BY LUC LATULIPPE



LOW-TECH CHIC

Thanks to the new Luddite movement, old-fashioned pens and paper may not become obsolete after all

IMAGINE A telecommunications system that allows information to be transferred across vast distances with the click of a button—a highway of thought that benefits scam artists and long-distance romances alike. Introducing... the telegraph. "Modern Internet users are in many ways the heirs of the telegraphic tradition," explains Tom Standage in his book *The Victorian Internet*. And that old dash-dot-dash isn't quite ready for the scrap heap. In April, the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, Australia, held a contest pitting Gordon Hill, 93 against Brittany Devlin, 13, to see which was faster, Morse code or SMS (the protocol cellphones use to send text messages). Surprisingly, Hill's telegraphy triumphed. He managed to send a 21 word (107 character) message 18 seconds faster than Brittany, despite her use of such text-message shorthand as "gf" for "girlfriend."

New is gee-whiz nifty and shiny, but it isn't always faster, better or cheaper. This epiphany forms the philosophical impetus of an emerging group of techno-skeptics call them modern Luddites. Where the original Luddites smashed English cotton mills, modern ones like Nicholas Negroponte, the founder of MIT's Media Labs, prefer to espouse the merits of appropriate technology. Negroponte is currently developing a US$100, no-frills laptop to be used as a learning aid for children in developing countries. Meanwhile, Ian Capstick, the federal NDP's 25-year-old press secretary, has taken inspiration from *www.43folders.com* and created a homemade hand-held digital assistant—a stack of three-by-five-inch recipe cards conjoined with a black binder clip—called the Hipster PDA. And Automatic Vaudeville Studios, a Montreal film collective, draws inspiration from classic black-and-white films for their hilarious (and self-financed) movies.

If these names sound unfamiliar, it's because modern Luddites have learned to speak softly lest they be labelled "laggards"—communication scholar Everett Rogers's term for the technologically stubborn. In his seminal book, *Diffusion of Innovations*, Rogers describes five different groups responsible for how new gadgets trickle through society: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and, last and least, laggards. Putting aside the value judgment implicit in such a term, laggard does not always indicate an Amish approach to the 21st century. Modern Luddites, like info guru Edward Tufte, make a clear distinction between rejecting technology a priori and test-driving innovations with a critical eye. In his infamous screed *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint*, he explains how there's nothing particularly innovative about software that "routinely disrupts, dominates and trivializes content. PP presentations too often resemble the school play: very loud, very slow, and very simple."

Other modern Luddites march backward into the future for purely aesthetic reasons. Pepe Tozzo's new coffee-table book *Retro-Electro* is a showcase of Bakelite and urethane masterpieces such as the sexy, cobra-shaped Swedish Ericofon (circa 1965) and Canon's 1970 one-pound calculator, the Pocketronic. While such items earn low marks for efficiency, their fun factor is immeasurable. Sci-fi luminary Arthur C. Clarke once wrote, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic," but voice mail mazes, spam and other digital pests are more likely to evoke the future shock of Radiohead's dystopian *OK Computer*.

Despite numerous virtues, being a modern Luddite isn't always cheap. Any dollar store will sell you a notebook, but the *au courant* Moleskine-brand journal, purported to be the idea receptacle of choice for Hemingway and Breton, costs 10 times as much. Of course, not being enslaved by technology is a status symbol. Sean Penn was seen toting a Moleskine during his trip to Tehran in early June, but he can afford a living, breathing personal assistant. Even the NDP's Capstick has a BlackBerry. After all, no one, save perhaps the Rhino Party, would lobby for the reinstatement of pneumatic message tubes. Modern Luddites want it both ways—they're reluctant to abandon digital conveniences, but suffused with romantic pining for an analog atmosphere. Their cellphones clatter with rotary-phone ring tones; they watch Buster Keaton films on DVD.

Sean Penn travelled to Tehran with the *au courant* Moleskine notebook

Inspired no doubt by Australian telegraph champion Gordon Hill, the enterprising blogger behind *lawakowa typepad com* recently created Morse Texter, an application for Nokia cellphones that allows text messages to be entered via Morse code. While not exactly an — — (that's S.O.S.) for SMS, Morse Texter proves that you can learn from history and repeat it, without necessarily dooming yourself. M

SCOTT PETERSON/GETTY IMAGES

'A LOT FEWER WHITE PEOPLE'

Once male and pale, the cadet corps is diversifying

IT'S THE SOUND of Cantonese in the midst of a summer training camp at CFB Borden that signals how much change has come to Canada's cadet forces. Alan Cheung and his cousin Warren Tsang fire remarks back and forth in their native tongue as they fill their water bottles. "We talk all the time to each other in Cantonese," says Cheung. This is the 14-year-old's first year at Blackdown, the summer training camp at CFB Borden near Barrie, Ont., and 15-year-old Tsang's second. The two Torontonians have been busy crossing rope bridges, perfecting their marching drills and teaching other cadets some Cantonese. Ask them about race or feeling different and they shake their heads in bewilderment. In their world, race just isn't a big issue.

Cheung and Tsang are the new faces of Cadets Canada. After decades as a predominantly Caucasian male-dominated institution, the youth organization is evolving with the times and diversifying. With its non-denominational chaplains, religion-appropriate cuisine and anti-harassment counsellors, Cadets Canada is attracting, and retaining, more visible minorities, Aboriginal boys and girls.

Designed for youth from 12 to 18, the cadets, an institution more than a 125 years old, hold weekly meetings throughout the year. Each summer, cadets are selected from local sea, army or air units to participate in two- or six-week training sessions, mainly at military bases, across the country. Their instructors are civilians and reserve officers, but the cadets are not technically part of the Canadian Forces. In fact, officials say, the federally funded program does not focus on recruiting new members for the Forces. Rather, it teaches youth about citizenship, teamwork and physical fitness. Oh, and some rifle skills and marching drills for good measure.

At Borden, nearly 50 per cent of the 2,300 cadets are girls, and approximately 40 per cent come from the ethnically diverse Greater Toronto Area. "We are just a reflection of how Canadian society has changed," says Lt.-Col. Allan Campbell, the camp's commanding officer. Though Cadets Canada doesn't keep official track of visible minorities, numbers have increased noticeably in B.C., Alberta and Ontario, where thriving economies and established ethnic enclaves have attracted thousands of immigrants. These three provinces account for 80 per cent of Cadets Canada's growth, from 48,600 in 1995 to 54,700 in 2004.

Although Richmond, B.C.'s cadets go by the name Irish Fusiliers, you'd be hard-pressed to find an Irishman among them. Based in a Chinese-dominated area, the unit is more than 80-per-cent Asian. It's led by Maj. Gary Law, a Chinese Canadian reserve officer who injects cultural lessons into regular cadet programming. His cadets not only learn first aid, drill and marksmanship, but they also visit Sikh temples and join Chinese New Year festivities. "We want to teach them to respect and interact with each other," says Law.

Lt.-Cmdr. Gerry Pash, a spokesperson for the cadet program in British Columbia, says it offers immigrant families an opportunity to become part of Canadian society and tradition. "Some parents see it as a way to 'Canadianize' their children," he says. Officer Cadet Saad Syed, a 19-year-old Pakistani-born Canadian, agrees. A former cadet and now an engineering student at Ryerson University in Toronto, Syed is a member of the Cadets Instructors Cadre that supervises and teaches youngsters. Syed says the organization helps many first-generation Canadians and new arrivals feel more comfortable in their new country. "It gives cadets a sense of belonging, confidence and a chance to make friends," he says.

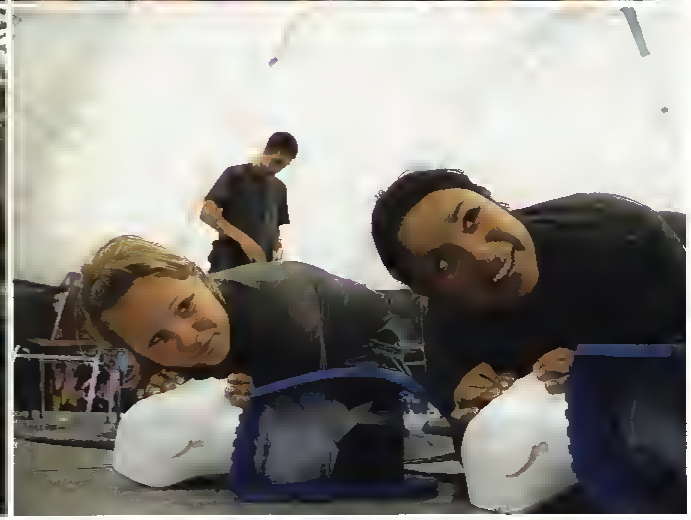
It is not just visible-minority immigrants who are helping fuel diversity in the cadet ranks. Increased interest from Aboriginal communities is also drawing more native youth into Cadets Canada. Taylia Robson, 14, from Owen Sound, Ont., and Amanda Montreuil, 13, from Hamilton, for instance, are in their second year at Blackdown camp, where they have become friends. "You get a lot of opportunities here," says Robson, explaining why she joined up.

It's the same in Terrace, B.C., where 35 of the 40 air cadets are from local Tsimshian tribes. Melodie Johnson, a cultural teacher with the Kitsumkalum band, says Aboriginal youth get a lot of experiences with the cadets they wouldn't get anywhere else. "They are not always exposed to cultural









Clockwise from top left: Syed; cadets getting hosed down on a hot day at CFB Borden; Montreuil and Robson practicing first aid; a woman sergeant addressing cadets

ON THE WEB For more photos from a day in the life of cadets at CFB Borden's summer training camp, visit *www.macleans.ca/gallery*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

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The new diversity is obvious as the cadets break for lunch at CFB Borden

learning at home," says Johnson, who designs the cultural programming for the Terrace air cadet unit. "We try to teach them about our way of life." Students learn the histories of their bands, about the matriarchal nature of Aboriginal societies and what their Indian names mean.

"For years, native people were shunted off into a corner because no one promoted the cadet program to them," says Capt. Ken MacKenzie, head of the Terrace unit. "And there was also a reluctance on their part to get involved with organizations outside their culture." But that's changing. By adopting native culture into the regular cadet programming, MacKenzie says, the Terrace cadets have succeeded in slowly bringing native groups into the fold.

Multiculturalism aside, the cadets have also become more gender balanced over the last three decades. Anywhere you look at the Blackdown camp, you see young women marching, climbing over rope bridges, learning first aid and doing a host of activities associated with the program. Capt. Stephen Roberts, 59, says this level of female participation couldn't have happened without a change in Canadian values. "When I was a cadet almost 50 years ago, I didn't see any females," says Roberts, the cadets' spokesman at Borden. "Women now have more freedom to do what they want, and that is why you are seeing more of them in the military, flying commercial jets, becoming firefighters."

For 14-year-old Amy Kalita, there's no mystery about what draws girls like her to the cadets—the adventure of rock climbing, rappelling and canoeing. On this day, Kalita, a two-year Borden veteran from West Lorne, Ont., has been out in the sun for more than two hours building a raft with rope, logs and plastic barrels. "It's a lot of fun," she says. "My friends are jealous when I tell them what I do at camp." This kind of word-of-mouth advertising has been invaluable to Cadets Canada, says Roberts. "We have a lot of girls who learn about the program from their girlfriends." Add some cadet brochures with pictures of smiling women performing CPR, aiming a rifle and skiing, and you get a winning formula, he says.

Still, Michelle-Ann Hall, a 17-year-old warrant officer from Brampton, Ont., is somewhat of a rarity at this camp. Not only is she a squadron leader, she's also female and black. Hall says she has noticed tremendous change in her five years with the cadets. "My group is more dominated by East Asians and blacks," she says. "There are a lot fewer white people than there used to be." Hall is also seeing more women in the senior ranks of the cadets. Asked if she has encountered any problems as a minority woman, she shakes her head. "This is a merit-based system," she affirms.

As for Cheung and Tsang, the question of diversity doesn't seem to matter in this world where everyone dresses in the same faded green cargo pants and T-shirts, eats in the same mess halls, and sweats under the same hot sun. What matters, Cheung says, is that "everyone has been nice." M

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

PLEEEASE, DADDY

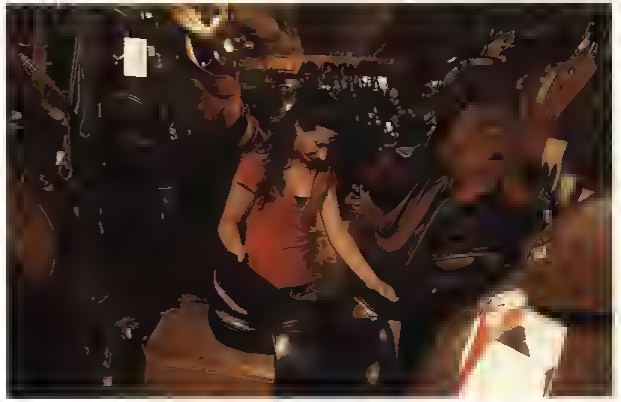
Riding. Sailing. Golf. Your kid's high-end passion is going to cost you, big time.

OPEN THE DOOR of Baker's Saddlery in Markham, Ont., and it hits you like high-class perfume. The warm—very rich—smell of leather. It's the favourite aroma of the suburban Toronto horsey set, and an acquired taste for the well-heeled newbies who equate all things equestrian with instant cachet. Owner Carmen Griseti knows them well. And every once in awhile—after 26 years in the business—he sees something different, the inexplicable germination of a love affair. "A little girl comes in with her befuddled parents, and it's there in her eyes," says Griseti. "That look." It's an expression that says, "I really want a pony of my own"—and it's going to cost, big time. In fact, it might add up to more over the years than, say, "Daddy, I'm dying to go sailing," or, "I want to play golf like Mike Weir," or "Please let me fly." Says Griseti, whose 16-year-old daughter, Jessie Beauchamp Griseti, has been riding for eight years, "When they really want to do something, you don't hold them back, right? You want a healthy kid."

Healthy, these days, can be heady, even though successful boomers like Griseti don't stint on their children's wants. "Growing up, I got nothing," he says. "I had to buy my own three-speed bike." But Griseti's son, now 23, has variously been enthralled by—and given up—paragliding, parachuting and kayaking. Where do kids come up with these things? And where do parents, even comfy middle-class ones, find the cash for them?

Canadian equestrian team member Jill Henselwood insists that riding "is not that expensive." Henselwood is now making her mark training young riders—two of her students placed in the top three in a prestigious jumping competition this summer at Spruce Meadows, near Calgary. In Oxford Mills, Ont., outside Ottawa, where Henselwood co-owns a hunter-jumper stable, riding is "reasonable," she says. That can mean leasing a show horse for about $1,000 a month ("buying one would cost the price of a good sports car," she notes), while keeping it and taking lessons at her barn is another $850. That clocks in at $1,850—about what it costs per month to carry a $340,000 mortgage these days.

Sailing comes a bit cheaper, but for Diane Kenyon it still seemed a luxury pastime. "We are not a wealthy family," says Kenyon, the head of public affairs for Ryerson University in Toronto, "nor a particularly athletic one." So a few years back, when her daughter, Madeleine Hayles, uttered the word "sailing," Kenyon "just howled. I said, 'Not in our lifetime.' " Madeleine persevered. A friend's family sponsored her at a local sailing club and, in just three seasons, the now 16-year-old has graduated from the beginner's White Sail I to the Bronze IV program, and is racing. Mom and dad pay the bills: $1,600 this summer alone. "It adds up," Kenyon says. "But we are going to support her."



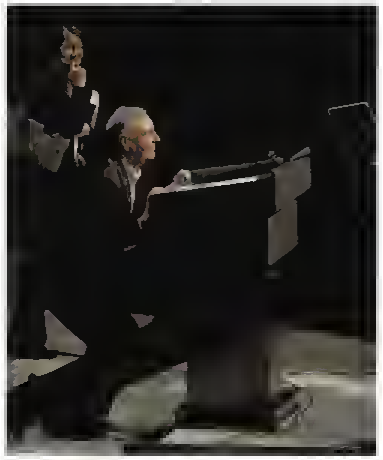
Griseti in her dad's saddle store: 'You don't hold them back, right?'

At the Queen City Yacht Club on the Toronto Islands, Learn to Sail program director Jon Moles stresses that he offers two-week day camps for as little as $300. Still, he allows, "If a kid wants to be a red hot sailor, he will need his own boat." How much for that? "Probably $6,000 to $20,000." Plus the cost of hauling it to, and entering, regattas in Ontario and across the country. But Moles says sailing is seasonal, don't forget, and boats—unlike horses—don't eat.

Golf camp, by comparison, is only $65 a day for juniors at Calgary's Heritage Pointe Golf Club. But wait. Private lessons are $45 an hour. And the overhead for a full year of intensive coaching is $1,500 (plus an $800 junior membership). "That's the next level," says director of golf John Wilson, "if they show promise." Clubs can run up to $2,000 more. And, "Nike golf shoes—just like Tiger's—are about $150 a pair," says Wilson. Lacoste shirts are optional.

But hold onto your Gold Card, parents, when your child sees *The Aviator* on DVD and starts running around making airplane engine noises. At Buttonville airport near Toronto, flying lessons are $200 an hour in a Cessna 172. Kids as young as 14 can solo, says dispatcher Loretta Lau, and at 17, they can hold a private pilot's licence. And how many hours in the air with an instructor before a kid can pass the test? Says Lau, with a throaty chuckle, "Sixty to 80." Do the math and weep. And don't even think about the price of that Cessna: $62,000, used. M

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S



BEHIND THE CLOSED DOORS

Jean-Marc Carisse was there with his camera

THERE ARE A LOT of photographers on Parliament Hill, but what set Jean-Marc Carisse apart was that when the posing and scrumming stopped and the politicians got down to business, he was still in the room. The Ottawa native is, by his own account, the longest-serving official photographer in the Prime Minister's Office. He served under Pierre Trudeau, John Turner and Jean Chrétien. He witnessed—and photographed—everything from constitutional debates to private dinner parties. Later this month, Carisse opens Carisse Studio Café, a café/photo gallery on Sussex Drive located in front of the U.S. embassy and a few blocks from his old bosses' home.

Carisse was hired by the national Liberal caucus in 1977 after he applied for a job and on his resumé listed photography as one of his interests. At the time, there were no official photographers in the PMO. He was expected to serve all Liberal members of Parliament, though he spent most of his time with Trudeau (when the prime minister left office in 1984, their professional relationship continued). Carisse freelanced during Turner's years as opposition leader, and learned only days after Chrétien's 1993 election that he was expected to become the new PM's official photographer.

Carisse speaks affectionately about U.S. President Bill Clinton and admiringly about Trudeau. Since his departure from the PMO in 2000 (he left after Trudeau's death, believing "it was the end of an era"), he's returned to his first passion—photographing performers. And although he admits "all politicians are performers," clearly from his own pictures some are better at it than others.



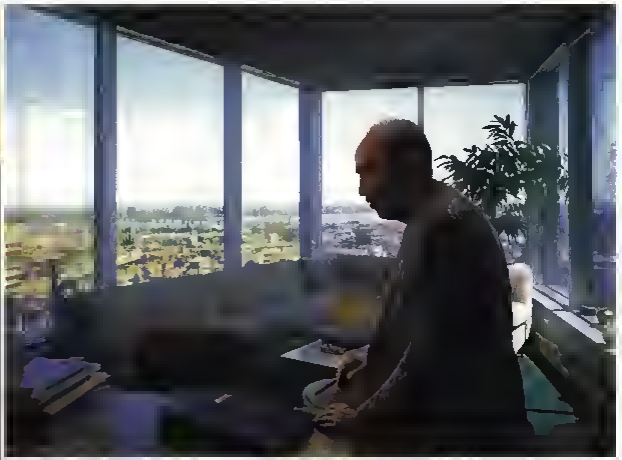




Clockwise from opposite page: a light Paul Martin moment in 2003; Bill Clinton and Jean Chrétien scaling a wall at the 1998 G8 summit in Birmingham, England; Jacques Chirac with Chrétien and his wife, Aline, in 1999; German chancellor Helmut Kohl enjoying nachos with Chrétien and Clinton at a NATO meeting

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEAN-MARC CARISSE











Clockwise from top left: Chrétien getting a backrub from Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto at a 1997 G7 meeting; Trudeau in 2000, just weeks before his death; Trudeau with son Alexandre in 1992; Diana Krall performing at 24 Sussex Drive in 1999; Trudeau with John Turner and Chrétien in 1985 at the Château Laurier hotel in Ottawa

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEAN MARC CARISSE

ROSIE'S LOVE BOAT

So much for debauchery. O'Donnell's gay cruise ship champions family values.

IT'S ALMOST LUNCHTIME, and a decidedly unglamorous Rosie O'Donnell is loading her tray with scrambled eggs at the R Family Cruise ship's buffet when 73-year-old Alice Aguado and her sister, Camille Bruno, spot her. "Rosie, you just woke up?" Bruno hollers. O'Donnell sits with the Long Islanders and, to their amazement, scarfs cafeteria grub with them for nearly an hour. Aguado gushes to O'Donnell, "I have four kids, but I only dream about you." "Well," O'Donnell tells her, "you should probably see a shrink about that." Though the seniors are travelling with the first gay family cruise line, they're both straight—they're here because they're Rosie fans. But now they fear being called out as intruders by the 2,200 passengers, including 600 children. O'Donnell sets the straights straight about gay families. "Talk to them," she urges, "sit with them, ask them questions. They don't mind."



This mid-July cruise is run by O'Donnell's partner, Kelli O'Donnell (they have four kids), and their close friend Gregg Kaminsky. But it was Rosie herself who dreamed up the concept of a cruise for gay and lesbian families. Kaminsky had booked her to perform on another gay party cruise ship. When it stopped in the gay town of Provincetown, Mass., O'Donnell's eyes were opened to a phenomenon she never knew existed—gay family vacations. "Rosie's been gay her whole life but there are many parts of gay life that she'd never experienced," says Kaminsky. She realized she wanted to take her children along on a gay cruise, but she couldn't. "None of the gay charter cruises welcomed kids," Kaminsky says.

The resulting cruise line fills a neglected niche market. This is the ninth cruise taken by Steven and David Garetto-Barnett from California, but their first with R Family. A couple for 13 years, they say this is the first time they've felt comfortable with their fellow passengers. They don't smoke, drink or use drugs, so the stereotypical hard-partying gay lifestyle never meshed with them—especially since they adopted two children three years ago. "Having kids means having to assimilate," Steven says. "It's about field trips, other parents and birthday parties. There's a bigger world that I have to be a part of." When the ship docks in Halifax, its first port before stops in Boston, Provincetown and Martha's Vineyard, Steven and David are among the 10 couples who go ashore to get married. Their son and daughter are there for the ceremony.

Other gay cruises wouldn't take kids, so O'Donnell launched her own

Also along for the cruise are two New Yorkers, Liz and Brenda (not their real names), closeted lesbians who met in the military. Now over 50, they're having trouble adopting because of their age and sexual orientation. Brenda has applied as a single parent, but Liz says the worst part has been hiding their best qualification for parenthood—a 13-year committed relationship. "To think that people wouldn't allow a child to have the opportunity to take up what we offer—love, comfort, financial stability—because we're gay," she says.

During O'Donnell's nightly shows aboard the Norwegian Dawn, a luxury cruise ship chartered from the Norwegian Cruise Line, she claims her ambition is to be the next Bob Barker, famous for "giving away free crap." Awarding an iPod to an audience member, the comedian screams in a terrifyingly aggressive voice that mixes toddler tantrum and bull dyke rage. "Be excited! Be excited!" The winner, a woman sporting a mullet, pumps her fist like she's at a monster truck rally.

For the families, who indulge in such un-gay activities as doing the hokey-pokey around the pool, this cruise is an opportunity to show their children that their life isn't so unusual. Singer Melissa Etheridge makes that point in a surprise appearance onstage. "It's so great for the kids," she says, her trademark long locks snipped into a skull-hugging short crop. "See, we aren't the strangest people on the block. We come in all different colours, shapes and sizes." With that, she launches into Janis Joplin's *Piece of My Heart*. The whole family goes nuts.

COURTESY R FAMILY VACATIONS

THE HAPPENING HOOKER

How a former tap-dancer from Montreal became Manhattan's No. 1 prostitute

AS A STRUGGLING actress trying to make it in New York City, "Natalia" has the usual assortment of off-off-off Broadway roles on her resumé. She played Ceres—a four line part—in *The Tempest*. She was Ingrid Superstar in an experimental play about Andy Warhol. One reviewer found her to be "comically sexy" as the neglectful wife in a Chekhov-style farce. Truth be told, until recently the highlight of her career might have been the time the former Canadian tap dancing champion shared the stage with Gregory Hines at the Montreal Jazz Festival.



'Natalia,' now working again as an actress, is making the most of the *New York* article

In the age of runaway brides, reality television and Paris Hilton, celebrity comes in many guises, however. And Natalia has found sudden fame for a very different type of talent. The 25-year-old from Montreal's Westmount neighbourhood is telling all about her stint as New York's number 1 escort—a hooker who commanded up to US$2,000 an hour, and received 10-out-of-10 ratings from the politicos, captains of industry and pro athletes who used her services. "They were coming to me looking for a vacation, a little break from their lives," she told *Maclean's*. "I think I made them happy."

In mid-July, Natalia (a *nom de guerre*) appeared on the cover of *New York* magazine, wearing nothing but a fur coat. The issue featured a lengthy article about her exploits and the rise and fall of Jason Itzler, the born hustler who used his considerable sales skills to make her the town's reigning paid companion. Itzler, Natalia's former boyfriend, is currently in Rikers Island prison, awaiting trial on charges of money laundering and promoting prostitution. His escort agency, NYC Confidential—which at its peak grossed $25,000 a night—was busted in January. Natalia, who walked away from him and his business a couple of months before the end, escaped arrest. But she's making the most of the notoriety. In the wake of the *New York* piece, she's appeared on CNBC and CNN. She's narrating a four-part documentary series, *Inside NYC Confidential*, that was shot at the agency's height, and will air this fall. She has a lead role in an independent film that will soon hit the festival circuit. And two big-name theatrical agents have expressed interest in taking her on as a client.

For the moment, Natalia is trying to save her family embarrassment by keeping her real name under wraps. But she says her mother, who's still in Montreal, knows about her hooker past and is supportive, if not exactly thrilled. Her brother is less understanding, but is the exception in her immediate circle. "The people who know me are impressed and happy that I'm turning this into something bigger and better," she says.

'THEY were coming to me looking for a vacation, a little break from their lives. I think I made them happy.'

Natalia first met Itzler, who was already running the agency, at the beginning of 2004, when he tried to recruit her. She had never considered hooking before, but was looking for a way out of an abusive relationship, and desperate for money. "I was raised in a good family, with good morals, but I was stuck in a bad position and had to find a way to take care of myself," she says. NYC Confidential offered a relatively safe working environment and had a "high-class" clientele. And to her surprise, Natalia found that she enjoyed the job. "The guys were really nice, they treated me well. We'd talk a lot about their lives." Drawing on her training as an actress, she immersed herself in the new role. "I was always there and present. I didn't separate or detach myself."

The clients responded with the best reviews of her career. At one point, she had 17 straight 10/10, "once in a lifetime" ratings on a popular escort-ranking website. Itzler hyped her attributes relentlessly, driving her asking price from $800 to $1,200, and then to the top of the ladder. She was in almost constant demand. And oddly, the allure seemed to be based more on her personality than her looks. "She's pretty," says Mark Jacobson, who wrote the *New York* article, "but is she one of those girls who walks down the street and you say, 'I'm going to jab a knife in my heart unless I sleep with her?' No." There's something more subtle about Natalia, he says. "She has this ability to focus on you and make you feel really important. Maybe it's her training as an actress, but she's really good at it."

Natalia proffers a more nationalistic explanation for her success. She was more human, "less uptight," than her American counterparts—a natural competitive advantage she hopes to continue using now that she's returned to her legitimate career. "I have no regrets," she says. "I'm pretty happy with all the choices I made." Maybe she'll prove that famous New York song right. If you can make it there, you'll make it anywhere.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BEATRICE NEUMANN, COURTESY OF ALEXIS ENTERTAINMENT NEW YORK

SIX DAYS AS A BOND GIRL

At a West Hollywood gym, SHANDA DEZIEL learns to fight, tumble, climb, hang, seduce and disguise

IT'S 9 A.M., and there's a knock on my hotel room door. The weapons have arrived. As a spy-in-training, I have only one skill left to learn—how to shoot a gun. The instructor, Mark Worland, a six-foot-four, 230-lb. hulk of a man, pulls a Smith & Wesson revolver and Ruger 9mm semi-automatic out of his black vinyl carrying case, placing them on the coffee table in front of us. "They're not loaded," he says, "but a good rule is to always pretend they are." After a half-hour of basics—how to load, hold and aim—I'm on my feet, revolver in hand with the TV in my sight line. The gun is heavy and the trigger hard to pull. Next, I try the semi-automatic, load it with fake bullets and face down the room's light switches—this gun has one of those cool red lasers to line up your target. But the handle is too big for my hand. Worland assures me that once we get to the firing range, I'll find a gun that's a perfect fit.

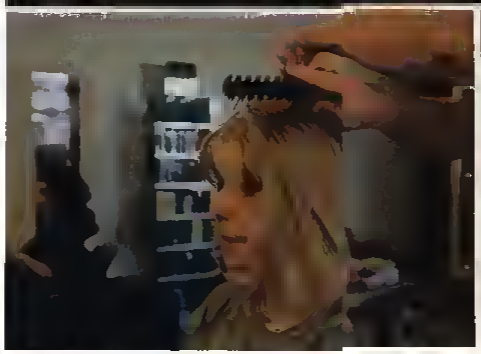
Is it wrong to be just a little excited?

This weapons training session takes place on the last morning of my six days at spy school in West Hollywood. I've spent a week learning to fight, tumble, climb, hang, seduce and disguise. This is not some high-tech, state secrets, serious spy school, but rather a fitness program designed to give females a firm body through a series of adrenalized and fun activities that impart the kinds of skills any Bond girl or Charlie's Angel might need: strength, balance, fighting techniques, weapons know-how and sex appeal. "Women see *Charlie's Angels* movies and go into a negative spiral," says Sascha Ferguson, owner of Absolution workout complex and co-creator of the spy school program. "They think, 'Why can't I be glamorous and sexy and fight and drive cars and shoot guns?' I was just sick of seeing people on TV learn what I wanted to know. Belly dancing is so sexy, so what's stopping us from learning to do it?"

I'M TOLD that once we get to the firing range, I'll find a gun that's a perfect fit. Is it wrong to be just a little excited?

The term spy school is just a cute marketing tool to draw actresses looking to enhance their action-movie skills, thrill seekers keen to try the latest fitness trends, and corporate retreaters in need of de-stressing. In fact, no one at Absolution refers to real spies or how they operate—that's left to your imagination. Ferguson comes up with an itinerary suited to your time and budget (the cost ranges from US$500 to thousands, depending on how many courses you take, for how long). Locals can draw out their experience by taking weeks or months of Pilates classes, self-defence, gymnastics, circus arts, rock climbing, belly and erotic dancing, and capoeira, a Brazilian martial art performed with music. Out-of-towners will have a more concentrated stint. For me, that was three weeks worth of exercise packed into one







Deziel learns how to use disguises and fend off a knife-wielding assailant. The spy school program is popular with actresses who hope for roles like Jannifer Garner (top) has in *Alias*.

OAY ONE: MEET MUGGS THE MUGGER

Groin, eyes, groin, eyes, groin, eyes—that's where to aim when fighting off an assailant. "Getting hit in either of those places," says David Cherkes, a martial arts expert and self-defence instructor, "stops a guy's momentum. His reaction will be to bring his hands to that area." Cherkes, a New Yorker who looks a bit like Ben Stiller in *DodgeBall*, encourages us to try it out. But first he dons an impressive padded suit, complete with a massive foam-and-duct-tape helmet. And he warns us that in this incarnation, as Muggs the Mugger, he might cross the line and say something that makes us uncomfortable.

There are 13 women of all ages at a so-called IMPACT assailant defence course at the Santa Monica YWCA. Some are here because they've wondered what they'd do if attacked. The teen girls have been sent by their fathers for some pre-college toughening-up. And one woman admits she wants to punch someone with all her strength. IMPACT allows people to do just that, by teaching them aggressive techniques and then pushing them into a highly adrenalized state. When my turn comes up, Muggs approaches, "Hey, I want to talk to you." At the first hint of trouble, a female coach reminds me to plant my feet, bring my hands to the front of my body, look directly at Muggs and respond, "I'm not interested in talking." This is the first counterintuitive lesson of the day. When faced with a strange man in a threatening situation, I, like many other women, will ignore him and walk faster.

While showing you're not scared will deter many would-be assailants, Muggs, of course, perseveres. "Why, bitch? You can't just stop and talk?" I've forgotten that this is Cherkes play-acting, as far as I'm concerned, I'm fighting for my life. I move my hands up closer to my head, ready to block anything that comes at me. And Muggs does—he lunges, and I stop him by throwing my palms in his face. That stuns him long enough for me to knee him in the groin, which brings him to the ground. Then I finish him off with a series of kicks and knees to the head. Needless to say, it feels good.

Taking a class like this is what pushed Ferguson—who used to work as a corporate trainer in the entertainment industry—to start Absolution and include IMPACT in the spy school program. "I was three weeks into the six-week course," says the 34-year-old former New Yorker, "when I essentially resigned my job and said, if I do nothing else but tell people about this class for the rest of my life, I'll die happy, even if I die broke." While it wasn't quite as life-changing for me, I am intrigued by the advanced course, in which you learn to fight off an intruder while blindfolded and lying in bed, and how to defend yourself from five bad guys at once.

OAY 2: STREET-FIGHTING WOMAN

Absolution specializes in one-on-one workouts on Pilates apparatus. Made from beds and chairs, the "reformer," the "cadillac" and the "wunda chair" were designed by Joseph Pilates in the early 20th century and offer the most intense, but least painful, workout I've ever experienced. Hooked up to springs and foot straps, working with levers and pulleys, your body is stretched and strengthened in unimaginable ways. It almost seems worth the $75 an hour.

After Pilates, it's time for a private street-fighting lesson with Cherkes/Muggs, who's carrying a rubber gun and taped up knife. Until

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: EVERETT COLLECTION; PHOTOGRAPH BY ANN JOHANSSON; PHOTOGRAPH BY ANN JOHANSSON

this moment, my response to having a knife or gun pointed at me would surely be complete and utter compliance. But Cherkes advises resistance. He comes up from behind and puts a knife to my throat, then tells me to press his hand tight against my chest so he can't move the weapon. Continuing to follow his prompts, I rotate my butt away from him and, with my free arm, punch him in the groin. Cherkes's tips for getting out of the way of a gun also seem simple—I just turn my body out of the weapon's range and push his gun hand in the other direction. Then if I'm feeling lucky, I can wrench his wrist and grab the gun.

DAY 3: WHERE DO I AUDITION FOR *ALIAS*?

I must have done a few thousand cartwheels and round-offs in my life—all before the age of 14. Now, at 32, the thought of planting my hands on the ground and propelling my legs over my head is daunting—especially at 9:30 a.m. in front of a group of surprisingly acrobatic adults. But with the assistance of head tumbler Paul Naylor, it's like Grade 6 all over again. Naylor, though, is not so impressed with my miraculous return to gymnastics, insisting my form could be straighter. Toward the end of class, he pulls the rings down from the ceiling. "Let's see how strong you are," he says. "I'm not," I reply. Despite the extreme pain from minute tears in my shoulder and arm muscles, I hang on as he brings my legs up over my torso. Then, when I fail to do anything on my own, Naylor sends me to the bench to watch.

THAT stuns him long enough for me to knee him in the groin. Then I finish him off with a series of kicks to the head.

Feeling a little dejected by the morning's activities, nothing comes as more of an ego boost than belly dancing—a must for any burgeoning femme fatale. With a beaded sarong wrapped around my butt, I try to isolate my hips without moving my upper body. It's not easy, but eventually I'm shimmying my way around the room, thanks to Judy Johnson—a gorgeous, full-bodied teacher/dancer who puts the hip in hypnotic. Looking in the mirror as we camel—one arm raised above our heads, our bodies making a worm-like movement—I've never been so happy to show off my not-exactly-flat stomach. After 45 minutes, the sweat is pooling. But I'm convinced I could deflect an assassination attempt with a perfectly timed hip toss.

Now that I've got the moves, all I need is the look. After all, *Alias* super-spy Sydney Bristow wouldn't be half as kick-ass without her wigs and disguises. In the on-site hair salon, Alice Murrell, a makeup artist, slathers on foundation before applying bronzer, dark blue eyeshadow, peach blush and a tad too much lipstick. Then stylist Kevin Scott, who's been fussing and fiddling with a long red wig, finally sprays it with conditioner, and we yank it onto my head. Checking myself out in the mirror I look like a soap opera star. How exactly will I carry out my spy duties if I can't stop looking at myself?

Yet, according to the artists, something's not right—my jeans and T-shirt. Ferguson, who happens to be wearing a more appropriate leopard-print slip dress, rips it off, puts on a robe and sends me off to change. Now swimming in a tall woman's clothes, I feel I'm walking a fine line between drag queen and stripper. Just in time for an indoor climbing lesson with two of the most attractive men in L.A.

DAY FOUR: WHAT—NO POLE DANCING?

While belly dancing gave me the basics for seductive spy behaviour, I was counting on erotic dancing to make me truly irresistible. Unfortunately, this type of exercise program is gaining such popularity in Los Angeles that the studio was closed for expansion. But other clients swear by it. After eight months of lessons, Suzanne—who's showed her moves to her boyfriend but doesn't want her last name printed—feels pole dancing brought her confidence and more presence. "Now when I've had a stressful day," says the 24-year-old Californian, "I pull out my pole at home, put on my little six-inch heels and booty shorts and just dance."

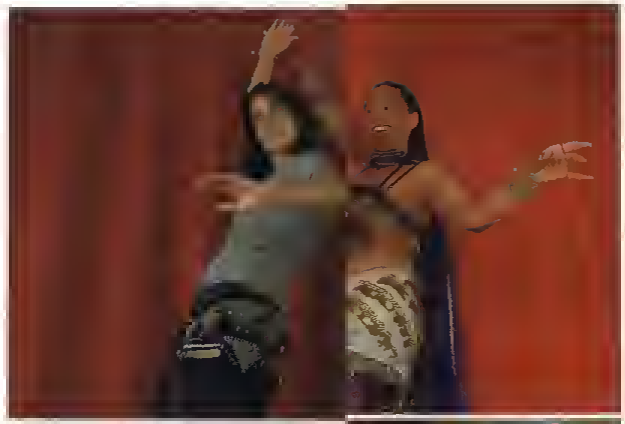
Instead of erotic dancing, I sit in on an aerial arts class, taught by former Cirque du Soleil acrobat Aloysia Gavre. Two students are practising a static trapeze routine, holding a series of artistic, nearly impossible-looking positions, putting all their weight on one arm or wrist, or hanging from the tautest of limbs. My turn on the bar is a bust. While trying to pull my legs up over the bar, my left shoulder freezes in its socket. Once again, I'm sent back to the bench. When class is over, actress Lauren Ambrose (Claire on *Six Feet Under*)—who's there to videotape a friend—takes a turn. Thanks to her ongoing Pilates training at Absolution, she's able to flip her legs up and over without seizing up—with *Six Feet Under* coming to an end this year, the fragile-looking redhead may turn out to be Hollywood's most unlikely action star.

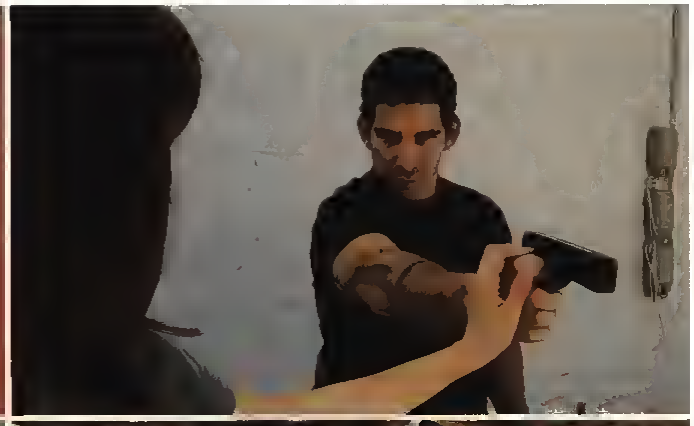
DAY 5: AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN LOW ENOUGH

My upper body has completely shut down, forcing me to ask, what kind of spy can't even open her own hotel room door? I'm tempted to bow out of today's rock climbing excursion, but Ferguson, in typical L.A. fashion, promises all will be good. She tells the teacher, James DeMalignon, to take me rappelling down the rocks instead of climbing them. He laughs. "You've got to go up to come down." So here I am facing a 40-foot rock face just outside of L.A. In between panic attacks, I make it about three-quarters of the way up, twice. Then, overwhelmed and light-headed, I pack it in. But if I was going to be a real spy, I'd insist on one of those nifty, Batman-type zip wires to pull me up a mountain anyway. This spy school is seriously lacking cool gadgets.

DAY 6: KUNG FU MY ASS, TRY TO KARATE CHOP A BULLET

With only three hours before I board a plane back to my relatively un-adrenalized life in Toronto, Worland and I arrive at the LAX shooting range. There's already a crowd waiting for the doors to open at noon. Once inside, I show ID, buy a $10 membership and presto, I have my choice of guns and live ammunition. Heading into the range room, I'm feeling less like a spy than a total imposter—the only one cringing every time a round goes off. But Worland sets me up with a small Ruger semi-automatic and I go through the routine—load the bullets, pull back the slide, aim and fire off 10 rounds. Repeat. He reels in the bull's-eye sheet, and it seems I'm not much of a shot. Next he takes a sheet with a human figure and sends it out 12 feet, telling me to aim at the head. This time, alarmingly, I fare much better. My target loses an ear and a nose and gets the rest of the bullets in the forehead. Satisfied, we return the gun and take a stroll through the showroom. Beneath the sign that reads, "Kung fu my ass, try to karate chop a bullet," there's a wide variety of shiny weapons that I could own and carry if I lived in some parts of the U.S., or if I was a spy, or even if I played one on TV. But for now my weapon of choice remains the pen—and maybe, on special occasions, a red wig. M









Spy school courses include instruction in gymnastics, self-defence and, in Deziel's case (top left), the lethally seductive power of belly dancing

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANN JOHANSSON

WILL, THE SECRET REBEL

Does all of Shakespeare's work contain hidden, dissident, pro-Catholic content?

LIVING IN MOSCOW toward the end of the Cold War with her husband, Raymond, a British diplomat, Clare Asquith went one evening to the theatre. It was the winter of 1983, when political censors and dissident writers still played a game of cat and mouse. They were the only westerners in attendance. The theatre was shabby and cold, but the audience was tightly packed, under the watchful eyes of KGB agents at the door and the Asquiths' two "minders."

At first, the adaptation of Chekhov short stories struck Clare as dreary. Slowly, however, she realized it was anything but—though the drama was set in 19th-century czarist Russia, the actors were making subtle changes that spoke to the concerns of life under 20th-century Communism. At one point, Raymond was called onto the stage and pressed into a walk-on role as a banker. The performers did not merely link him with *dengi* (Russian for "money"), but with *valuta* ("foreign currency"). The audience roared in appreciation of the subtext—that Russia's only hope of salvation lay in openness to the West and foreign investors. His wife looked anxiously at the KGB agents, but it was obvious they didn't get the message and assumed the actors were mocking Western capitalism. For Clare, whose interests had always lain more in the superpower politics of the 16th-century Reformation, a penny finally dropped.



SHADOWPLAY
Clare Asquith, HarperCollins, $34.95

What happened that night more than 20 years ago set in motion a train of events culminating in the release of a book containing the most startling and original theory of Shakespeare since his works were first written. Clare Asquith's *Shadowplay: The Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare* is at once a historical thriller and an astonishing work of scholarship—a real-life *Da Vinci Code* for people who think.



The Bard, (opposite, top) the real-life Romeo and Juliet and the pair in Franco Zeffirelli's film

Asquith's premise is that nearly all of Shakespeare's work contains a coded reference to the politics of his day. This code would have been understood by his intended audience—what Asquith calls the "educated but ordinary" people—but would not have been apparent to his Elizabethan censors. This was crucial, for in Shakespearean times the performance of dissident works led not to the gulag, but to the gallows.

His intention, she believes, was not merely to amuse his audience with subterfuge. Surrounded by a repressive police state and haunted by spies, Shakespeare was concerned that the true historical record of his age would be lost, censored out of existence by the Elizabethan court. "He was much more like a journalist than a scholar," she told *Maclean's*. According to *Shadowplay*, Shakespeare was also a recusant Catholic—he refused to attend Church of England services—with ties to similar-minded aristocrats.

"Even if only half of Clare Asquith's argument turns out to be correct," Cambridge historian and biographer John Guy has written, "she's written the most visceral, challenging, and compelling book on Shakespeare's place in history we've had for over twenty years." And if it all turns out to be correct, she will have single-handedly turned the mighty citadel of Shakespearean scholarship on its head.





'SHAKESPEARE worked out a set of simple markers, basic call signs that would alert his audience to the entry point they needed to access the hidden story'



Only in the past few decades have historians revised their assumptions about the period. Far from being a happy time of peaceful transition from Catholicism to Protestantism, the Tudor and Elizabethan reigns were in fact the most brutal and turbulent period in English history. Shakespeare required not only the wit to encode his plays and sonnets with historical references, but the confidence that his works would survive until the day their deeper meaning could be clearly understood by posterity.

Obviously, his works have survived. And Asquith believes that now, four centuries on, she has finally discovered the key to unlocking their hidden messages. If true—and she makes a convincing argument of her case—then it can only heighten appreciation of the Bard's manifold gifts. "Clearly," she says, "he is the cleverest man that ever writ."

What makes her audacious theory more remarkable is the fact it was written on a kitchen table in moments snatched from caring for her husband and five children. In person, Asquith, 54, is engaging and down-to-earth, a determined and passionate woman, never more so than when discussing her favourite subject. She refrains from the use of her title, the Viscountess Asquith (her husband, the grandson of the British prime minister from 1908 to 1916, will one day assume the title of 3rd Earl of Oxford and Asquith), because "those things don't count for very much these days." Although she lives in the family seat—Manor of Mells, in Somerset near Glastonbury—her lifestyle is not grand. "I have so many children that I was literally reading and writing while ironing and cooking," she says. "I wouldn't have thought it possible, but it was."

Her family connections did provide an insight into the period, however, that caused her to question the prevailing theory of England's happy division from Rome. The ancestral home, Manor of Mells, was granted to the family (then called Horner) after Henry VIII seized Glastonbury Abbey and its manor houses in 1539—the deed bearing his signature still hangs on a wall. The abbey once sat at the very centre of early Christian belief in England, connected by legend to King Arthur, the Holy Grail and Joseph of Arimathea.

As part of his campaign to seize the wealth and power of the Catholic monasteries, Henry VIII had the abbey razed, its priceless fixtures destroyed, and its abbot, Richard Whiting, hanged, disembowelled, and boiled—in that order. "I didn't put this in the book, and I've never mentioned this publicly before," Asquith says. "But our ancestor, Thomas Horner, was on the jury which, I hate to say, convicted the Abbot of Glastonbury to death. He was rewarded with the Manor of Mells." Prompted by this knowledge and a strong Catholic faith, Asquith began to research the history of the common people of the time, known collectively as "John Nobody," who continued to resist the Protestant court in London but whose voice was officially silenced.

Elizabeth I, who restored Protestantism to England after a brief Catholic revival, has generally been portrayed as more moderate than Henry. Asquith's research revealed her to be equally ruthless, only much more subtle and efficient. She established a sophisticated network of spies and informers to stay abreast of the Catholic resistance, and doled out imprisonment and death to recusants. It was during this period when Will Shakespeare, raised in a Catholic home

BETTMANN/CORBIS

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY; FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, UK/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY; EVERETT COLLECTION

in Avon, moved to London and began to write for the stage

Prior to Asquith, Shakespeare's works have been considered devoid of topical references, dealing instead with universal themes of love, power and ambition. But it struck Asquith as ridiculous to presume that someone of Shakespeare's intelligence and curiosity would ignore the momentous events around him—or that the audience would tolerate such disregard.

She began to look for clues in his works, alive to the Elizabethan love of wordplay, puns and double meanings (a love which lives on in England to this day, whether in the endemic crossword puzzles or double entendres of English comedy). Her excitement mounted as she read the texts with new eyes. "I was simply blown away," she says. "Once I got into the zone, I knew every day, as I would pull the thread that much farther, it would yield something new."

A simple example is a passage that many observers have long believed to contain a typographical error, the line of poetry in *Sonnet 23* that goes: "More than that love which more hath more expressed." On the surface, it does not make sense—until Asquith realized it was a pun. "It should read, 'More than that love which More hath more expressed,' " she says—a reference to Sir Thomas More, the chancellor and Catholic saint beheaded by Henry VIII for refusing to take the oath of supremacy recognizing the monarch and not the pope as head of the Church in England.

Similarly, she says, all of Shakespeare's characters existed on at least two levels, the dramatic and the allegorical. In much the same way as Arthur Miller's creation Willy Loman is both a stage character and a symbol of the elusive American dream, so did Shakespearean audiences understand Lear, Cleopatra, Viola and Hamlet as allegorical of contemporary realities. "Shakespeare worked out a set of simple markers, basic call signs that would alert his audience to the entry point they needed to access the hidden story," Asquith asserts. "He kept his signals simple and consistent. The master key to the hidden level is so simple that it is easy to miss."

This is the opposition between "high" and "low," and "fair" and "dark," which recur in all of Shakespeare's works. "High" and "fair" always indicate Catholicism, while "low" and "dark" indicate Protestantism—a reference to the "low" church service that did not include Mass, and the black worn by Protestant puritans.

Asquith discovered an entire glossary of coded phrases. Whenever Shakespeare uses the word "tempest," for example, he is making a reference to the turbulence of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. "Love" has two meanings, human and spiritual. So, when he writes in *Sonnet 116* that love "looks on tempests and is never shaken," the underlying message is one of faith to the Old Religion.

The coded language was a vehicle that allowed him to comment on current events without risking the wrath of the authorities. Viewed through this prism, *Romeo and Juliet* becomes a commentary on the forbidden love between the 3rd Earl of Southampton and Elizabeth Vernon, one of the Queen's more impoverished ladies-in-waiting. *King Lear* becomes a symbol of James I, while his daughter Cordelia's refusal to make a public affirmation of unconditional love represents the refusal of Catholics to take the Oath of Supremacy.



Sonnet 23 was thought to contain a typo, a repetition of the word 'more,' until Asquith realized it was a pun—a reference to Sir Thomas More, who was beheaded by Henry VIII for keeping true to his Catholic faith

Coriolanus has always been viewed as one of Shakespeare's most impenetrable plays (except perhaps by Cole Porter, who wrote in the lyrics to *Brush Up Your Shakespeare*: "If she says your behaviour is heinous / Kick her right in the Coriolanus"). Asquith says the play becomes understandable when seen as a measured commentary on the failed Catholic coup known as the Gunpowder Plot, uncovered two years before the play was written and still marked every Nov. 5 as Guy Fawkes Night.

Her theories have gained the endorsement of E.A.J. Honigmann, the esteemed dean of Shakespearean scholars, who at first found them too incredible to believe. He returned her manuscript with the comment, "No, sorry, I can't accept this." He later came to stay at the Manor of Mells, where Asquith pleaded her case with what she calls a "full, Technicolor, wide-screen lecture." At the end of which, Honigmann bowed his head and replied: "You have persuaded me to change my position."

While the opinions of such scholars matter to her, Asquith says it's far more important that her discoveries lead to a deeper appreciation of William Shakespeare's works by his wider audience. That the Bard's contribution to literature is unmatched is already accepted, but to imagine he somehow combined this with a historical account of his age is almost beyond belief. Not, however, for Asquith, who still recalls her Jesuit teachers insisting that each page of her school notebook be inscribed with the initials AMDG—*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, or "To the Greater Glory of God." "He was engaged," she says of Shakespeare, "in a kind of divine work." M

FRANCIS G. MAYER/CORBIS



A MASTER CLASS IN SMUT

Star comedians put on a show of virtuoso profanity in *The Aristocrats*

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH loves to talk about freedom, that precious thing soldiers are dying for in Iraq. So you'd like to think that back home assaults on freedom of speech would concern grave matters of national security. But no, debates over what's permissible in the world's proudest democracy have been inflamed by the terror of Janet Jackson's exposed nipple, the gay infiltration of SpongeBob SquarePants, the right of a cartoon rabbit to have same-sex parents—and now a movie about the filthiest joke ever told. This Sundance hit is a documentary called *The Aristocrats*, which features some 100 comedians telling, and dissecting, the same dirty joke in jazz-like flights of improvisation. They include such stars as Robin Williams, Chris Rock, Whoopi Goldberg, Richard Lewis, Bill Maher, Paul Reiser, Jason Alexander, Billy Connolly, George Carlin, Eric Idle, Bob Saget and Jon Stewart. But AMC Theatres, America's second-largest cinema chain, has decreed *The Aristocrats* will never show on its screens, either in the U.S. or Canada. This summer, however, it will play non-AMC theatres on both sides of the border. And ThinkFilm, the nervy little company that owns world rights to distribute this fabulously dirty movie, is Canadian.

If you haven't heard the joke—a backstage favourite among professional comics—you're not going to read it here. Well ... okay. Here's the gist, without the dirty bits. A guy walks into the office of a talent agent to pitch a vaudeville "family" act—the guy's family performs an orgy onstage involving children, a dog and every bodily function, fluid and orifice imaginable. "So what do you call the act?" the agent asks, and the guy replies, "The aristocrats!" Not funny? Without the filth, and flourishes of comic timing, there is no joke. As Le Corbusier apparently observed, "God is in the details," and the same could be said of humour, or obscenity.

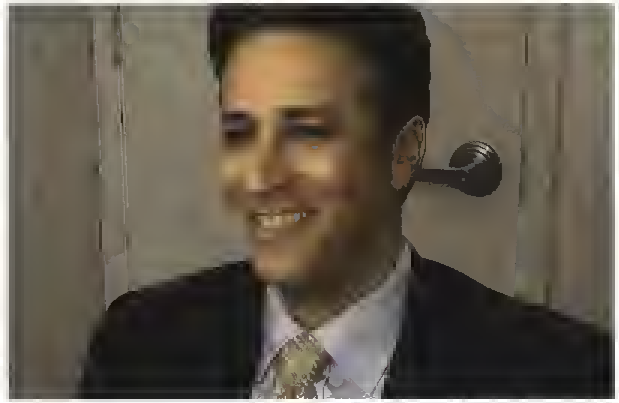
The Aristocrats may be the first American movie to provoke a censorship controversy that has no images of sex or violence. Just words. And it has the foulest language of any movie I've ever seen. But once the shock wears off, there's something sweetly affectionate about this backstage portrait of comedians letting loose. The words become meaningless, just notes in a bebop cadence. With agile cutting, the film is itself a masterpiece of comic timing—and an eloquent discourse on the nature of obscenity, wit and the thin blue line of taboo.

The joke, which goes back to at least the 19th century, "was always the secret handshake of the comedy circuit," says magician-comedian Penn Jillette (of Penn & Teller), who bankrolled *The Aristocrats* and executive-produced the film with Paul Provenza. Seldom performed, "The Aristocrats" serves as a jazz standard that comics like to practise among themselves. The set-up and the flat-footed punchline are always the same, but the improvised mid-section is infinitely variable. Michael McKean (*This is Spinal Tap*) remembers that, in the '70s, cast members of *Saturday Night Live* would indulge in "Aristocrats" contests, stretching their improvs into scatological marathons. "It kind of makes its own gravy, this joke," he says.

What's most shocking is to see stars such as sitcom dad Bob Saget hurling themselves into the gutter. "But Bob has a rich history of this," Provenza told me. "The surprise to most of us who know him is not that he talks dirty but that he did *America's Funniest Home Videos* and *Full House*."

Whether *The Aristocrats* provokes a backlash remains to be seen. But ThinkFilm's Toronto-based CEO Jeff Sackman, who snapped up the rights at Sundance, says "This is the one that will put us on the map." Calling it "the perfect frat-boy movie," he adds, "The whole point was to get it on the national media agenda—similar to Mel Gibson and Michael Moore, but without those expectations." Jillette, however, is wary of dramatizing the free-speech issue. "The fact that the AMC guy has a tiny dick is not my problem," he says. "I've been fighting this guy since junior high. I was the guy telling jokes in the cafeteria, and he was the guy ratting on me to the principal. There's nothing more American than the dirty joke. George W. Bush tells dirty jokes—I know that because he tells them to Kinky Friedman and Kinky Friedman tells them to me."

So, a guy walks into the Oval Office ... M



Stewart is among 100 comics who tell the same basic joke in jazz-like flights of improvisation

COURTESY OF THINKFILM

IF LOOKS COULD KILL

John Irving glowers up a storm while promoting his new book

JOHN IRVING SEEMS to have a thing for tank tops During the past month or so, at the famous author's cottage on Georgian Bay, he's proudly shown off his writer's shack to reporters and his lack of a farmer's tan to photographers It's funny, but even at 63, he maintains his trademark glare—part of the fierce image he's been perfecting since his literary debut in 1968 with *Setting Free the Bears* "John Irving, like Coca-Cola, is a brand," says Anne Sowden, who runs Toronto-based Here's Looking At You Image Consulting "He's always been consistent with his look—which is a key when marketing yourself I'd imagine it's something he's very much aware of"

So considering that his new novel, *Until I Find You*, includes a number of semi-autobiographical details—including the abuse of a pre-adolescent boy by an adult woman—it comes as no surprise that he's upped the intensity during the recent media blitz The photos splashed on the arts pages of major dailies and magazines all resemble each other—he looks more like a thug than a wealthy author Even among the outtakes of some recent Irving photo shoots, it's rare to see a smile soften that rugged face When it does, it looks tortured "He told me that he hates smiling in pictures," says Andre Souroujon, who photographed Irving for *Maclean's* (the middle shot) "It's just not his thing He's a tough guy"

Not to mention a master of the publicity game. In photos, with his arms often clenched tightly across his chest—a body language expert might wonder which secrets didn't make his new, 820-page tome—Irving is simply maintaining his ferocious image. "He wouldn't be comfortable posing in a three piece suit with a toothy grin," says Sowden, adding with a laugh "Does he even have teeth?" No doubt they're clenched too M

ON THE WEB For more coverage of John Irving's new book, visit *www.macleans.ca/johnirving*







National Post (top) and *Toronto Star* (bottom) images, and a *Maclean's* outtake

TYLER ANDERSON/NATIONAL POST (TOP); PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRE SOUROUJON- JIM RISS

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BACK IN THE BUILDING

Elvis (Stojko, that is) returns to the spotlight as a formidable kung fu fighter

A BEEFY 190-LB. GOON, wearing a goalie mask and wielding a wooden club, moves in to dismantle Elvis Stojko. Flashbacks of the Nancy Kerrigan/Tonya Harding scandal of '94 spring to mind. But there's a big difference. This figure skater can fight. Stojko deftly sidesteps an attempted strike, clips his attacker's weapon with his own and slips in behind him, giving himself a clear shot at the back of his would-be assailant's head. Then, right before exacting his revenge, he retracts—offering a wink, and an aside, to an onlooker. "He's lucky, we're only training."

That's right, folks—Elvis is back in the building. It just happens that this time it's the Céad Bua Fighting Arts Centre in Milton, Ont., where, instead of a figure-skating costume, Stojko is wearing a black muscle shirt and a pair of warmup pants. Here, under the tutelage of Glen Doyle, his *sifu* (teacher, in Cantonese) since 1989, Stojko is preparing for November's world karate championships in Niagara Falls, Ont. In May, he qualified at the nationals for two events—hand forms (the slashing palm) and weapons forms (double daggers). By doing so, the 33-year-old figure skating ninja instantly became one of Canada's great two sport athletes.

Stojko left the amateur skating world behind in 2002 and, though he tries to get on the ice every day to keep fit, spends most of the year living out of a suitcase. He travels widely, appearing in shows and teaching both skating and kung fu around the world. He spends time with his long-time girlfriend, Jessica (he won't reveal her surname) who is studying business in the U.S. But Stojko seems most at home in Doyle's gym—where framed photos of him and other national team members hang on the wall like family portraits—even if he doesn't always love the music selection. Tonight, Dropkick Murphys' celtic punk pounds from a small stereo. Stojko prefers '80s hair bands. "Sometimes Glen lets me crank the Scorpions," he laughs, proving that you can never take the mullet out of the man.

Stranger still is his dream of being a rock star. "I have a demo disc of some covers I've done—Creed, White Snake and White Lion," says Stojko, who played a role in the stage production of *Grease*, starring Frankie Avalon, last year. "I'm planning to break in with a pop rock album but then get into more adult contemporary stuff. You know, like Josh Groban." It's hard not to laugh, but considering his track record, it seems silly to argue. Who knows—maybe we'll all be downloading his rock anthems from the Internet some day soon.

THREE years after leaving the world of skating, he's competing in two events at the world karate championships

But first things first.

Stojko has never been secretive about his passion for the martial arts. He started taking karate lessons when he was 10 (he's been skating since he was 4) and earned his black belt at 16. "My dad put me in karate because I was getting picked on a lot at school," says Stojko, who stands five-foot-seven and weighs in at 170 lb. (about 10 lb. over his skating weight). "I only had to use it once. It was in Grade 9 and I'd had enough of this one guy so I grabbed him and threw him up against a locker with a hip throw and put my arm up against his throat. I was very shy, so people took notice. I didn't have any problems after that."

In 1994, he combined his sports passions when, with the help of Doyle, he built an on-ice routine around the action in *The Bruce Lee Story*, which earned him his first world title, as well as a silver medal in Lillehammer, Norway. "I received a lot of faxes and letters from martial artists saying that they really appreciated what I'd done for the sport because I was authentic," says Stojko, who plans to become a *sifu* later this year. "I wasn't a skater trying to apply martial arts. That would have been hokey. They could tell that I was a martial artist first."

But who knew he'd take his kung fu fighting this far? Well, Stojko certainly did. So did Doyle. "On the ice he was always confident, but when he started mastering the martial arts he became fearless. Nobody matched his focus," says Doyle, who was recently selected as one of the national team coaches. "He's bored when he's not competing. That's just his way. It's what keeps him sharp."

Stojko credits much of his success to not ever getting completely wrapped up with one sport. In fact, next year, he's thinking about getting more involved in motocross—a sport he's loved since childhood. "I have a KTM-400 dirt bike and a BMW F 650 GS for off roading," he says. "I've been into bikes since I was 7 and into motor rebuilds and all that performance stuff since I was 12. Next year, I might jump into a couple of 10- to 25-km races. The off roading is tough. It's all about river crosses and getting through tight trees and over rocks."

But the consummate competitor admits that his "addiction to performance" has proven to be a challenge in the past. "As a teenager, I was so competitive that I had to stop trying to do everything," he says. "I'd snap playing video games or lose it if I was beat at air hockey. I realized that if I didn't watch it, I was going to have a heart attack before I was 20." He chose to focus on two sports, but he has never managed to slow down. When he's travelling, his unquenchable desire to be the best gets him out of bed at 2 a.m. to run through his forms without distraction in the hotel parking lot.



Next, the consummate competitor thinks he might get more involved in motocross racing

Back in class, fellow national team member Rich de Borja (the guy who was in the hockey mask earlier) lets out a primal scream that reverberates off the gym's concrete walls. Sweat pools around the athletes' feet. Outside, the humidity makes it feel like it's 42°C. But that's cool, compared to the blistering heat trapped inside the gym (Doyle doesn't believe in ceiling fans, never mind air conditioning). And yet, Stojko, eyes glazed over, is comfortably in his zone.

It's this unwavering focus that turned the vertically challenged kid into a three-time world skating champion and two time Olympic silver medallist. During the hour-long training session, Team Canada's Mike Morris suffers a muscle cramp in his right leg and needs a quick breather, and at one point, de Borja hurries to the washroom, worried he might throw up. Meanwhile, Stojko is silent and nearly motionless, except to perform the required movements being barked out by Doyle. "Rich and I get in a mode where we want to rip something apart," says Morris. "Elvis is much more stoic, controlled and relaxed."

But like his teammates—who are considerably larger than he is—Stojko rarely flinches when Doyle kicks him in the back of his legs—a strength test repeated continuously during class. The Energizer Bunny on blades, who triple-lutzed his way into figure-skating history, is now channelling everything inside. Even his breathing is perfectly measured. "Control your breathing and you control every part of your body," he explains later. "That's what the really good long distance runners do. I only focus on breathing. If not, the pain is going to get to you no matter what type of shape you're in."

When the workout ends, club members cool down by pouring water on each others' heads. Some find a piece of wall to hold them up. Another collapses onto the rubber mat. Stojko, meanwhile, jumps up and down, shaking sweat from his hair. It seems like he's just getting started.

"You alright, E-man?" Doyle asks.

"No problems," says Stojko, cracking a smile. Then, without warning, he turns his game face back on, walks to one of the exits, and buries 20 explosive kicks with his size-nine sneakers into the building's brick exterior. How can the wall stand a chance? M

PHOTOGRAPH BY K.C. ARMSTRONG



'ALLOW FOR SHRINKAGE'

Corky Laing reflects on 40 hard-lived years in rock 'n' roll

THIS YEAR, MONTREAL-BORN drummer Corky Laing is celebrating 40 years in the music business. It's also 35 years since his band, Mountain, arrived on the scene with its debut album featuring the now classic *Mississippi Queen*. Laing and guitarist Leslie West (the other surviving original member) have been busy touring with Deep Purple and working on a new album of old Dylan songs made a whole lot louder. Laing shares his thoughts on the music industry and the rock 'n' roll lifestyle.

Mountain is releasing a collection of Dylan covers. Not an obvious choice for a notoriously loud band—how did that come about?

Alien vs. Predator was the first time I'd heard of people taking two big movie brands and putting them together. Mountain's also a brand, and we just had to find someone else to get connected to brand-wise. Dylan's got the best words ever written and he has the simplest melodies ever written. The thing that he doesn't have is a lot of percussion. Bingo! I thought, wait a minute, I can get creative with that, but it's a very ambitious project.

You and Leslie West have written a book about rock 'n' roll life in the early '70s. The cast of characters includes John Lennon, Keith Moon and Salvador Dali. Does anyone stand out most in your mind?

Everybody's got something. I was lucky in my 150 years on the road to meet people who were going through a good time. Like I met John Lennon during his lost weekend. As a drummer, timing is everything—and I've been very lucky.

Some of your stories of life in Mountain sound kind of grim—drug abuse, violence, you name it. Was it worth it?

I'd have to say yeah, everything's worth it. Everything counts. I don't think anybody in this business can have any regrets. You're getting paid for something I don't think you have the right to get paid for.

As someone with both "rock star" and "record exec" on his resumé, you seem uniquely qualified to comment on the impact of file sharing on the music industry. What are your thoughts?

The impact on artists is that it's the very best thing you can have. You can't have a better set-up than to have everything based on how good you are. Sharing is always good. If somebody's stealing *Mississippi Queen*, let him steal it.

The Beastie Boys sampled *Mississippi Queen* in one of their songs. How did you feel about that?

That's a very, very, very sensitive issue. They won't even talk to me. That's what bothers me: they never return my calls because they know it's going to cost them. That's not file sharing, that's stealing. That's stealing your copyright.

So you don't have a problem with sampling as long as people go through proper channels?

Yeah, that's exactly right. In the words of Levon Helm [the Band's drummer], my favourite of all people in the world: "You can do anything to music, the music don't care."

What's excited you musically of late?

I listen to everything. I really believe that there's something in everything. I'm not saying it's good, but it's interesting.

What are your long-term plans?

Long term for me is waking up tomorrow morning and not being in the obituaries. I'm not a young buck anymore, but I'm having fun.

Do you have any pearls of wisdom for aspiring rock stars?

Yeah. Allow for shrinkage. That's a motto for life.

ROB ANNANDALE

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

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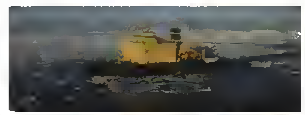
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I'M NOT A LUMBERJACK

But I'm okay—now that I'm a recovered chainsaw power junkie

POWER IS NOT only corrupting, it is addictive. And the power of a chainsaw is particularly addictive for many men. I am, I confess, one of them. I had wanted a chainsaw for as long as I could remember, and when I finally got one, it was as though I'd taken an aphrodisiac. I was filled with lust to cut something—preferably large—into pieces.

I decided to trim the copse of scruffy Manitoba maples at the foot of my modest backyard. I already had an aluminum extension ladder that could easily reach seven metres, and with it in place, I climbed to attack the profusion of branches at the lowest level—a modest but, as it turned out, wise choice for my first foray.

I set to work as though I'd been born to the task. Wood chips flew, and the unwanted branches floated to the ground; the saw was living up to all my expectations. It was so exhilarating, a kind of frenzy seized me and I neglected to watch exactly where I was cutting. What happened next was right out of the cartoons: I inadvertently lopped off the branch my ladder was resting on. (In my defence, I must point out that there were so many leaves, they masked the fact I was cutting on the tree side of the ladder rather than the end of the branch side. I'm not stupid, just overeager.)



Fortunately, I hadn't been able to reach all the branches, so the ladder fell only a short distance before coming to rest on an uncut limb. The jolt, however, dislodged me. I managed somehow to land on the now gently sloping ladder, but on my forearms, facing downward. I slid to the ground face first like a child on a playground slide—except I was holding a buzzing chainsaw in front of me—hitting each rung on the way down. I was bent, but not broken. The chainsaw, stalling when it hit the ground, was unscathed, my infatuation with the machine undiminished.

Shortly afterwards, a neighbour asked me to remove a tree from her property. A sturdy old oak, it towered some 12 m in the air and was growing much too close to her house. It was more than I could handle, but I had an inflated opinion of my abilities as a tree surgeon—never mind the fiasco in my own backyard—and said yes. With a couple of assistants, a.k.a. my teenage boys, I approached the tree one sunny Sunday morning, my saw newly sharpened and fully fuelled. The plan was to start with a relatively safe and easy first step: take off a lower branch that projected out over the sloping lawn to the sidewalk.

This limb was about as thick as my waist at its widest and about halfway to its end it divided into two smaller but still substantial branches. I decided to lop them off to make the remainder shorter and easier to handle. I would then attach ropes to this part, undercut it near the trunk, and with my crew, pull it to the ground away from the house.

The first problem arose when I realized that, as was often the case, one of my neighbours had borrowed my aluminum extension ladder. I, in turn, borrowed a wooden ladder, which unfortunately was only about half the length of my ladder. Still, it was the only one available, and since it just reached the branch, I put it in place. As a safeguard, I then lashed the top rung to the branch and carefully noted on which side of the ladder to cut.

Smug in the knowledge that I had, in fact, learned a thing or two from my previous experience, I started to saw.

Within seconds, the two branches dropped to the ground. But minus their weight, the main limb lurched upward as though it were some kind of clumsy bird taking flight. The too-short ladder now became a sort of multi-level trapeze, its bottom clearing the ground by inches as it swung back and forth. I was left with my legs projecting forward, while from the waist up I was draped over that damn limb, fighting to hang on to the saw (fortunately I was able to hit the kill switch). I looked like a cat unable to scramble onto a ledge. My helpers were convulsed with laughter. When I finally convinced them to stop, I had them put some weight on the bottom rungs of the ladder so I could get down.

I took my turn as ballast as I sent one of them back up to untie the ladder. We placed it against the tree trunk and once again I climbed up. I made the partial cut to the branch near the trunk, then moved the ladder out of the way, putting it on the lawn next to the house.

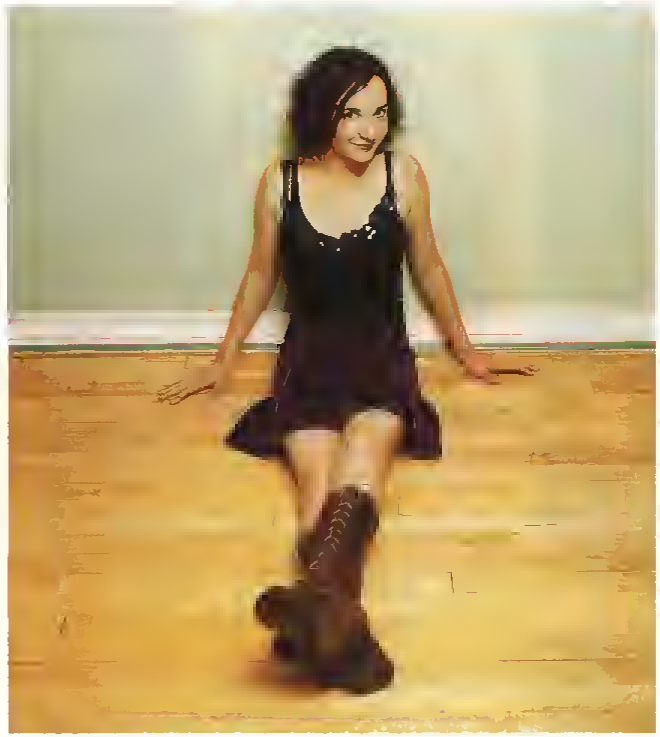
From the sidewalk, we heaved on the ropes I'd thrown over the branch during the trapeze incident. We heard a welcome cracking, and with a final cataclysmic explosion, the branch parted from the trunk. But it had a mind of its own and landed at a 90-degree angle from where I wanted it to fall. It missed the house—just—but crashed right on the borrowed ladder, smashing one side of it to matchsticks.

Felling trees is now behind me. My neighbour hired a professional firm to finish the job, and I stayed out of the way. Oh, I still have the chainsaw, but I cut only the occasional piece of firewood. Just the rumble of the motor is enough for me now. M

Glynn Leyshon buys his bandages in London, Ont. To comment: overto@macleans.ca

ILLUSTRATION BY SAM WEBER

BACKTALK



Music | One acre, two storeys, 25 love letters—and a new CD

Levandoski's bought a new home but named her debut *Unsettled Down*

Singer-songwriter Alana Levandoski has a tip for all prospective, budget-conscious homebuyers: think really small. For example, in her tiny hometown of Kelwood, Man., she picked up a two-storey house on an acre of land for $100. "It was built in 1914 so it needs a *lot* of work," says Levandoski, who thinks it might be livable by next year. "But you can just feel the history when you walk through it. Actually, I discovered about 25 love letters, written between 1928 and 1931, hidden away in the walls."

Levandoski—who was raised on gospel music and home-schooled ("my parents thought the extra freedom would help me develop artistically")—also found much of the inspiration for her standout folk country debut, *Unsettled Down*, in rural Manitoba. "The big city just isn't natural for me," says the 26-year-old, who last fall moved into her grandmother's old farmhouse near Kelwood, after seven years in Winnipeg. "I knew that I would be able to tap into some major creativity out here." Seems she had to settle down to unsettle down.

JOHN INTINI

"I'm a hard sell but Alana has such a unique voice and her material is very intelligent. She really thinks about what she writes."
—Sylvia Tyson, who co-wrote two songs on *Unsettled Down*

CDs | From amazing to zzz

CUFF THE DUKE, *CUFF THE DUKE*



Starting off with harmonica, and a twangy falsetto, Wayne Petti leads his four-piece into 11 tracks of smart cowpunk that show a musical breadth unexpected from a pack of 25-year-old suburbanites (Oshawa, Ont., to be exact). After opening for many of this country's important acts (**Sloan, Broken Social Scene, Blue Rodeo, Kathleen Edwards**) they're set to conquer on their own terms—with a sophomore CD. Highlights include a saloon romper, *Take My Money and Run*, and the country-prog rock stunner *The Ballad of Poor John Henry*. All the tracks are epic in scope if not in length, and will leave you alternately crying in your beer and banging your head.

JASON MRAZ, *MR. A-Z*



One surefire way to be a one-hit wonder is to say that you aren't one. Mraz, an American artist whose style is **Dave Matthews** crossed with **Bobby McFerrin**, does that and a lot more over-the-top self-referencing in his new single *Wordplay*—a follow-up to his big 2003 radio hit, *The Remedy*. Mraz has a unique voice and real range, but he's goofy—and not in a good way like the **Barenaked Ladies** or **Ben Folds**. Unlike those artists, he's lacking the wit to back up his eccentricities. *Mr. A-Z* lives up to its name—Annoying-Zzz.

SHANDA DEZIEL

PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS FRICKE

Film | To live and collide in L.A.

It's become a Los Angeles sub-genre, a style of mongrel narrative that seems native to the city's sprawling geography: an ensemble of disparate characters pursue unrelated trajectories, until they eventually collide in a twist of fate. We've seen it in many films, including *Pulp Fiction*, *Grand Canyon*, *Short Cuts*, *Magnolia* and most recently *Crash* and *Me and You and Everyone We Know*. Now there's *Happy Endings*, a three-ring circus of dysfunctional relationships from writer-director Don Roos (*The Opposite of Sex*).

An abortion counsellor (Lisa Kudrow) is approached by a dodgy young filmmaker (Jesse Bradford), who

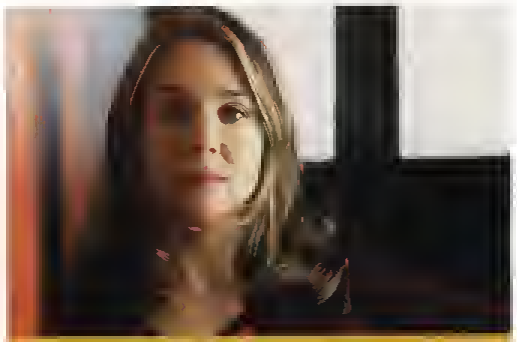


Cybill Shepherd is a split dinger after Arnold's character in *Happy Endings*

offers to identify a child she gave up for adoption if he can film the reunion. Instead, she convinces him to shoot a movie about her Mexican masseur (Bobby Cannavale), an illegal alien who likes to cross sexual boundaries. In the film's most delectable storyline, a beguiling Maggie Gyllenhaal brings amoral élan to the role of a singer who beds a gay musician (Jason Ritter), then sets her gold-digging sights on his wealthy father—played with off-kilter charm by Tom Arnold. The third subplot involves a gay sperm donor (Canadian David Sutcliffe) and his partner, who challenge their best friends, a lesbian couple (Laura Dern and Sarah Clarke), over the paternity of their child.

Knotted with themes of abortion and adoption, Roos's macramé of storylines gets a bit baroque—and is further complicated by coy intrusions of explanatory text. But this is rich material, animated by natural performances and sensitive, hand-held camerawork. Although his hopscotch script often strains credulity, Roos has crafted a robust, adventurous comedy of sexual confusion that shows happy endings don't have to be Hollywood endings.

BRIAN D. JOHNSON



Megan Follows | On women who lit up the stage

Megan Follows (*Robson Arms*) is hoping for the same high she had from her first-ever stage performance—she played a king in a Grade 1 play—when she appears in Sam Shepard's *Fool for Love* (Aug. 10, Toronto). She recalls two of the most inspiring performances she's seen.

1. Vanessa Redgrave in *Orpheus Descending* (1989): "At one point, she gets completely undressed on stage. Her body was so real—just a beautiful body of an aging woman. There was something so vulnerable about her as Lady Torrance."

2. Her mother, Dawn Greenhalgh, in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (early '80s): "She was terrifying in that role. But everything was very calm at home, so I was grateful she was getting it all out on stage."

MACLEAN'S 100 | TOP 10

There are a lot more Canadianisms than 'eh'

Sprinkled throughout the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* are more than 2,000 Canadianisms. Katherine Barber, the book's editor, tells us her favourites.

1. Shit disturber—a person who enjoys causing trouble or discord.

2. Bangbelly—a dense cake made of cooked rice, flour, molasses, raisins, salt pork and spices.

3. Blueberry buckle—a cake topped with blueberries and a crumbly topping, most common in the Maritimes.

4. Jambuster—a jelly-filled doughnut.

5. Bumbleberry—a mixture of berries.

6. Gotch—underpants.

7. Great white combine—hail (most often used by Saskatchewanians).

8. Idiot string—a string attached to each of two mittens or gloves and strung through the sleeves of a child's coat.



We Canucks called them gotch

9. Mangia-cake—derogatory term for a non-Italian white person with North American traits or customs.

10. Molson muscle—a beer belly.

Top 10 runs during *Maclean's* centenary

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF LIONS GATE FILMS. COURTESY OF CTV. GETTY IMAGES



John Waters finishes John Intini's sentences

John Waters loves being known as the "prince of puke." In fact, the highly subversive Baltimore-based filmmaker, who turned Johnny Depp into a big-screen leading man with *Cry-Baby* (now on DVD), has made it his life's mission to gross out moviegoers—some of his classics include *Mondo Trasho* and *Pink Flamingos*. But Waters, 59, kept it clean while finishing *Maclean's* Associate Editor John Intini's sentences.

I USED TO PRETEND . . . when I was a kid that I owned a dirty movie theatre and imagined the horror it would cause in my neighbourhood.

I GET FREAKED OUT by racists. Whenever I meet one, I always assume that they're just kidding around and have to try to keep from laughing.

I NEVER TURN DOWN A CHANCE TO investigate why people act the way they do. I don't think anyone is born bad so I'm curious about what changes them.

AS A KID I WAS NEVER ALLOWED TO WATCH movies condemned by the Catholic Church. The first thing I rebelled against was the pledge for the Legion of Decency when I was 7.

THE LAST TIME I THREW A punch? I've never hit anyone in my life. I'd never win a fight, so I stuck to verbal abuse.

YOU SHOULD NEVER meet your idols. I met Little Richard and was disappointed he was so humour-impaired.

FOR MORE "JOHN INTINI'S SENTENCES" VISIT WWW.MACLEANS.CA/PEOPLE

ESSENTIAL WATERS

- kicked out of the Catholic Youth Organization for lewd dancing.
- 2. Is fascinated by high-profile murder trials.
- 3. Is sometimes mistaken for actor Steve Buscemi, he once sent out Christmas cards with a photo of Buscemi to see if friends noticed.

VANCOUVER was ranked the second-most dog-friendly big city in North America, behind Chicago, by the pet travel experts at *DogFriendly.com*

RUBY WAKS/CORB S OUTLINE

Books | A life entwined with history

Olga's Story is the dramatic saga of Olga Yunter, the mysterious, Communist-fighting grandmother of London-based Canadian journalist Stephanie Williams. Haunted by the secrecy surrounding her Siberian-born grandmother, who died in 1974, Williams spent 10 years travelling and conducting interviews in Russia, China and England, all countries where her grandmother had lived, and piecing together her life with the help of old letters, notebooks and photos.

The result is a gripping chronicle that ranges from Yunter's fight against the Reds during the Russian Revolution to her escape from Mao Zedong's troops in Shanghai. Yunter also had to deal with the killings of her three brothers and her husband's internment in a Japanese prison camp. With its poignant episodes set against milestones of the 20th century, *Olga's Story* is compelling indeed.



OLGA'S STORY
Stephanie Williams; Random House of Canada, $35.95

BestSellers

Fiction

		POSITION LAST WEEK
1.	**UNTIL I FIND YOU,** John Irving (1)	
2.	**THE DA VINCI CODE,** Dan Brown (105)	2
3.	**THE HISTORIAN,** Elizabeth Kostova (1)	1
4.	**CROSS BONES,** Kathy Reichs (2)	4
5.	**THREE DAY ROAD,** Joseph Boyden (13)	3
6.	**IN THE COMPANY OF CHEERFUL LADIES,** Alexander McCall Smith (11)	7
7.	**SPECIMEN DAYS,** Michael Cunningham (5)	6
8.	**THE TRIUMPH OF THE SUN,** Wilbur Smith (8)	5
9.	**THE MYSTERIOUS FLAME OF QUEEN LOANA,** Umberto Eco (3)	8
10.	**A LONG WAY DOWN,** Nick Hornby (2)	10

Non-fiction

1.	**FREAKONOMICS,** Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner (6)	1
2.	**THE COLLAPSE OF GLOBALISM,** John Ralston Saul (8)	2
3.	**BLINK,** Malcolm Gladwell (26)	9
4.	**FRENCH WOMEN DON'T GET FAT,** Mireille Guiliano (24)	4
5.	**YOU: THE OWNER'S MANUAL,** Michael F. Roizen and Mehmet C. Oz (9)	5
6.	**THE WORLD IS FLAT,** Thomas L. Friedman (14)	7
7.	**ON BULLSHIT,** Harry G. Frankfurt (8)	3
8.	**CAMPO SANTO,** W. G. Sebald (1)	
9.	**THEM,** Francine Du Plessix Gray (5)	10
10.	**1776,** David McCullough (7)	6

() Weeks on list
Compiled by Brian Bethune



LET THEIR PEOPLE COME

Why are we still imposing visa restrictions on seven new EU members?

THIS WEEK we're going to actually try to get something done in this country. You can help, if you like. We begin with a story.

Meet Ivar Tallo. He's the head of Estonia's e-Governance Academy, which sounds obscure until he talks about it. Estonia's forced annexation into the Soviet Union came with oppression's usual tool kit: slaughter, torture, secret police, secret files, disappearances, interrogations. So Estonians *really* don't like it when governments know more about citizens than citizens know about their government. Tallo and his colleagues work to ensure it can't happen again. Anyone can go online in Estonia and see every record the government holds about them—along with a list of everyone in the government who's looked at those records.

In short, Tallo has things to say that any government, including ours, needs to hear. Unfortunately, when I said "Meet Ivar Tallo," I was speaking metaphorically, because he won't be visiting Canada anytime soon.

He needs a visa to visit Canada, which means he has to give up his passport while his application is processed. His passport and visa application would have to travel from Tallinn to the Canadian embassy in Warsaw which processes visas for the Baltic states, then back. Tallo would normally visit several countries during this time. "I can't give up my passport for six weeks. Give me a break, guys."

Now here's the thing.

For no clear reason, Canada requires visas for short-term visits, not only for visitors from Estonia, but from six other European Union member states: Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. For most, the delay is a lot shorter than six weeks. But it's a pointless hangover from the Cold War. A hassle Canada imposes on no other Europeans—and which none of the seven countries imposes on Canadian visitors.

Ivar Tallo, incidentally, studied here. In the early 1990s he was a Ph.D. candidate at McGill University. He could return to lecture our senior officials on democratic reform. "Or I might just want to go to my favourite depanneur in Montreal and say hello to the nice Greek guy there. Or have a bagel. I respect and understand your right to have an independent country. But if you want to have friends ..."

Canada is losing friends in one of the world's most dynamic regions, not through any great misdeed but because of this silly visa restriction. In Bratislava, a half-dozen Canadian businessmen told me Slovaks bend their ears about visas all the time. In Ottawa, a Polish diplomat told me the visa restriction has become the first issue at every meeting. Too often it's also the last issue because our feds can't explain why (a) somebody from France can visit Canada with only a passport, (b) somebody from Poland can visit France with only a passport, (c) that same passport isn't enough for the Pole to visit Canada.



There are 800,000 Canadians with Polish ancestry. And at least another 430,000 with links to Hungary, Lithuania and the rest. When one dies or gets married, potential wedding or funeral guests have to work too hard to get here. Why?

Borys Wrzesnewskyj is the Liberal MP for Etobicoke Centre. He's trying to get visa restrictions lifted for the seven countries in question. He can't get a clear answer from his own government. Is it because some Czechs abused their visa-free status and tried to stay in Canada a decade ago? That was before the Czechs' own western European neighbours welcomed them into a union far bigger and richer than ours.

Is it because the Americans also impose visa restrictions on the same seven countries? So what? Canada is still a sovereign country. It expresses that sovereignty by letting Mexicans and Bahamians and citizens of many other countries into ours without visas, even though the Americans require them.

Like everyone I've asked, Wrzesnewskyj suspects the rules stay in place simply because nobody can be bothered to remove them. In 20 years when these countries are among the most influential in the world, Canada will be paying for its short-sightedness.

So let's fix it.

On April 14, Wrzesnewskyj tabled Resolution 238 in the House of Commons, which calls for the seven countries' visa restrictions to be lifted. Private members' resolutions normally sit around forever. Let's get Parliament to put Resolution 238 to a vote and Paul Martin's government to end the visa restrictions. And let's get it all done by Nov. 9—the 16th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Go get some scissors. Cut this page out, add polite comments of your own if you like, and mail it to your MP in Ottawa. You don't even need a stamp. Tell Ottawa the Cold War is over. M

To comment: backpage@macleans.ca
Read Paul Wells's weblog, "Inkless Wells," at *www.macleans.ca/paulwells*

ILLUSTRATION BY AISLIN



The one thing sport-touring people love to do is ride – long and hard, regardless of the weather. That's what the **Honda ST1300** is all about. It blends outstanding torque and amazing handling into a supremely comfortable and smooth sport-touring machine.

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